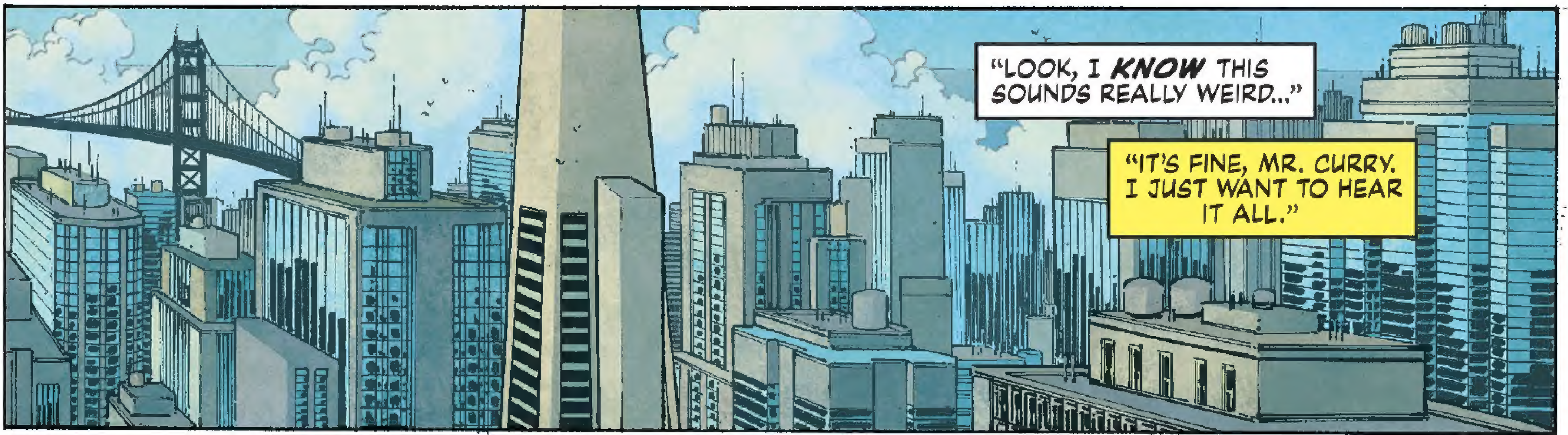
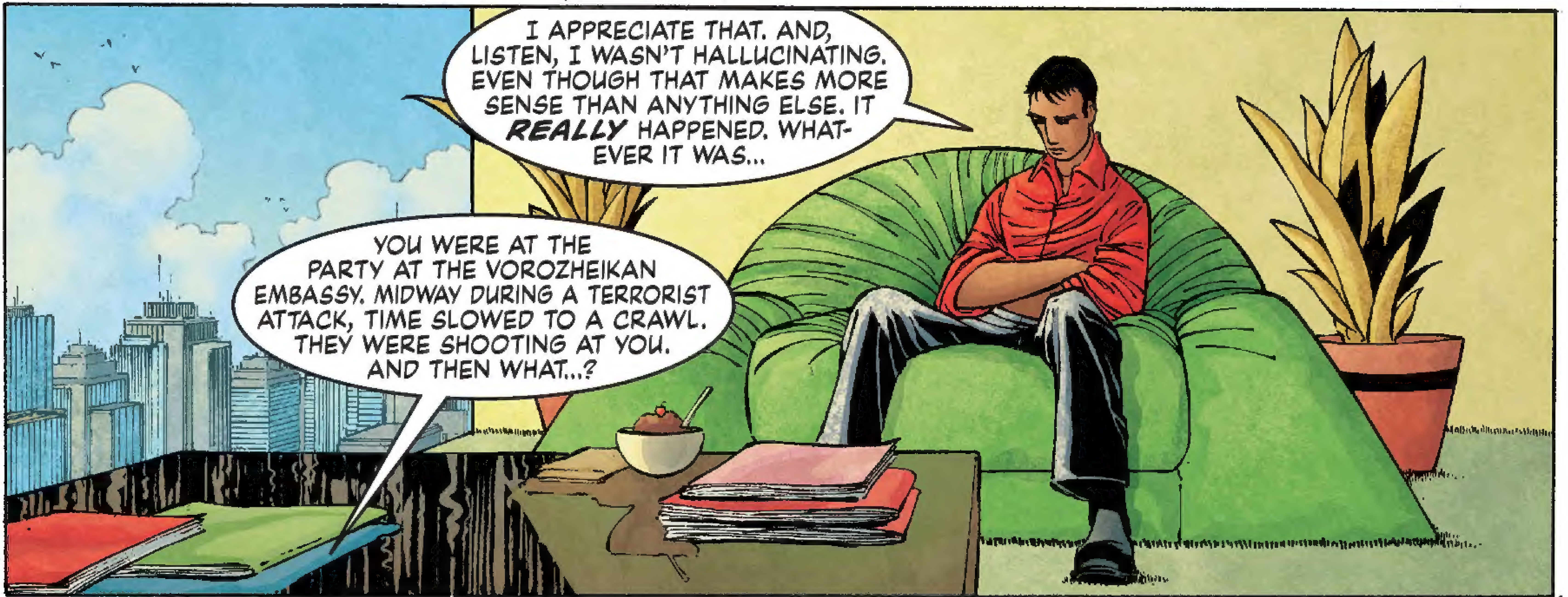
ETERNALS

NEIL GAIMAN • JOHN ROMITA JR.

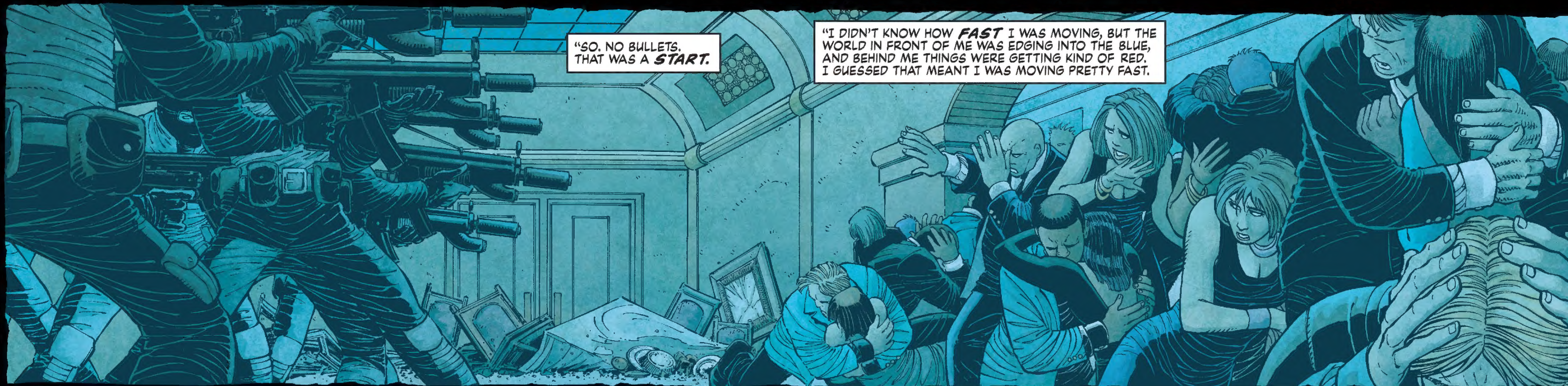



"LOOK, I KNOW THIS SOUNDS REALLY WEIRD..."
"IT'S FINE, MR. CURRY. I JUST WANT TO HEAR IT ALL."


I APPRECIATE THAT. AND, LISTEN, I WASN'T HALLUCINATING. EVEN THOUGH THAT MAKES MORE SENSE THAN ANYTHING ELSE. IT REALLY HAPPENED. WHAT-EVER IT WAS...
YOU WERE AT THE PARTY AT THE VOROZHEIKAN EMBASSY. MIDWAY DURING A TERRORIST ATTACK, TIME SLOWED TO A CRAWL. THEY WERE SHOOTING AT YOU. AND THEN WHAT...?


AND THEN TIME STOPPED COMPLETELY. I WAS MOVING FASTER THAN THOUGHT...
...AND I HAD TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH THE BULLETS. AND THE GUNMEN. AND I HAD NO IDEA HOW LONG THIS THING, THIS TIME-STOP THING, WAS GOING TO LAST...
SO WHAT DID YOU DO?


"I GOT A BIG METAL VASE, AND I GATHERED UP THE BULLETS IN IT."


"SO. NO BULLETS. THAT WAS A START.
"I DIDN'T KNOW HOW FAST I WAS MOVING, BUT THE WORLD IN FRONT OF ME WAS EDGING INTO THE BLUE, AND BEHIND ME THINGS WERE GETTING KIND OF RED. I GUESSED THAT MEANT I WAS MOVING PRETTY FAST.


"I TOOK THE GUNS AWAY FROM THE TERRORISTS. I TRIED TO BE GENTLE, BUT IT WASN'T EASY...


"I FOUND A SAFE-DOOR OPEN IN AN OFFICE, AND I PUT THE VASE FILLED WITH BULLETS IN THE SAFE AND LOCKED IT. I LEFT THE GUNS IN THE OFFICE. THEN I SHUT THE DOOR BEHIND ME.
"I FIGURED THAT WHEN TIME STARTED AGAIN, THE BULLETS WOULD HAVE A HELL OF A LOT OF KINETIC ENERGY TO WORK OFF.
"I DIDN'T KNOW HOW I WAS GOING TO SUBDUE THE GUNMEN. I WAS AFRAID I'D ALREADY BROKEN SOME FINGERS TAKING THE GUNS AWAY FROM THEM, AND MOVING THEM, WELL, I COULD HAVE KILLED THEM...
"AND THEN, EVERYTHING STARTED TO BLUR. I COULD FEEL THE WORLD SPEEDING UP.
"I TRIED TO SLOW DOWN, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. I COULDN'T STOP."

"I MUST HAVE CRASHED INTO THE GUNMEN AT THE SPEED OF A RACING CAR... IT WAS A MIRACLE THAT NO BONES WERE BROKEN. ***MINE,*** I MEAN. THEY WEREN'T SO LUCKY.

"AND THEN IT WAS ALL HAPPENING IN REAL TIME AGAIN..."

WE NEED TO HELP HIM!

BUT THE ***SHOW.*** WE CAN'T FIGHT CRIME, REMEMBER? WE SIGNED ***WAIVERS.***

HEY, YOU CAN BLOW IT, IF YOU WANT, GRACE. NOT ME.

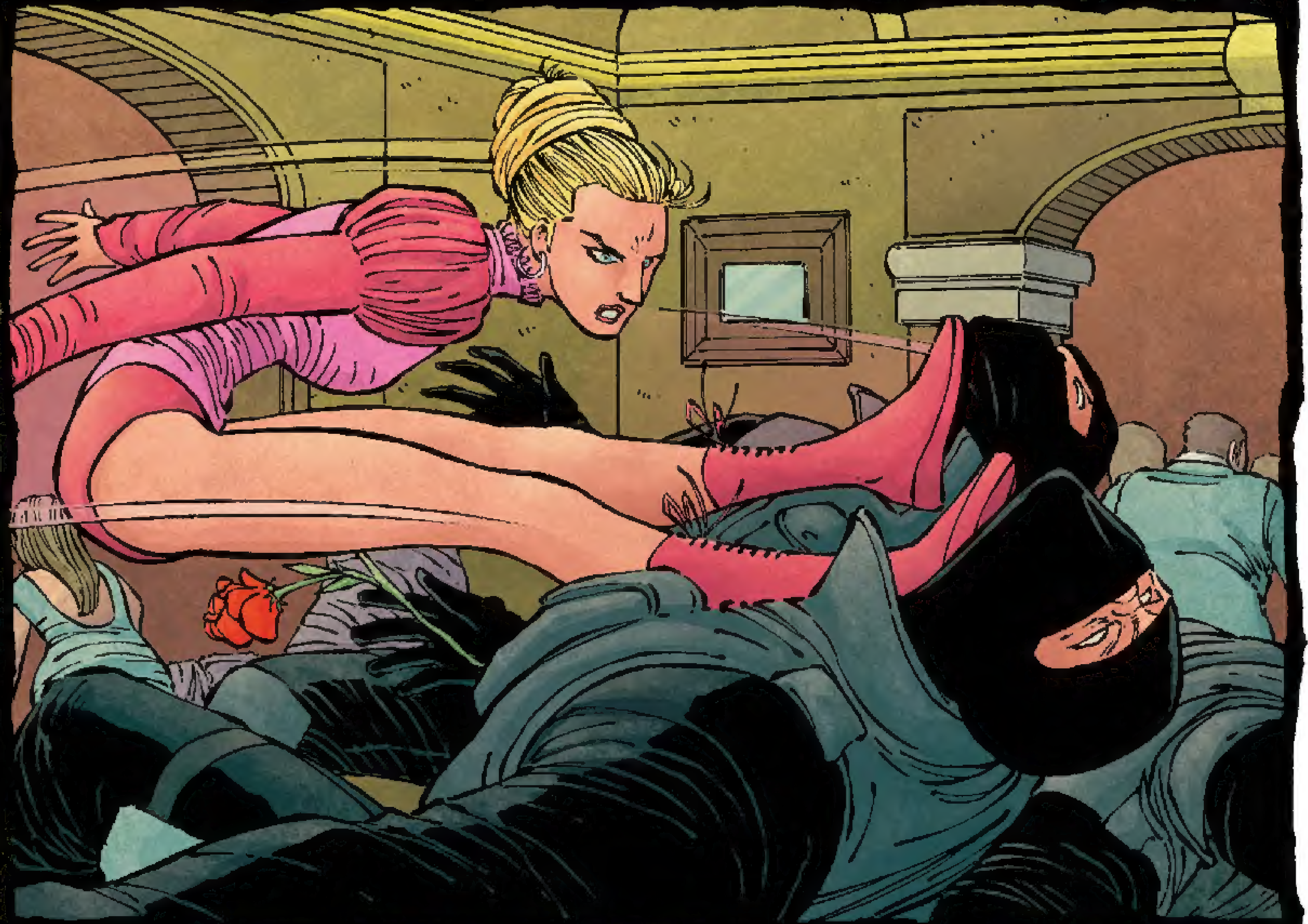
THE SHOW BE ***DAMNED.***

I'M GOING TO BE A ***STAR.***

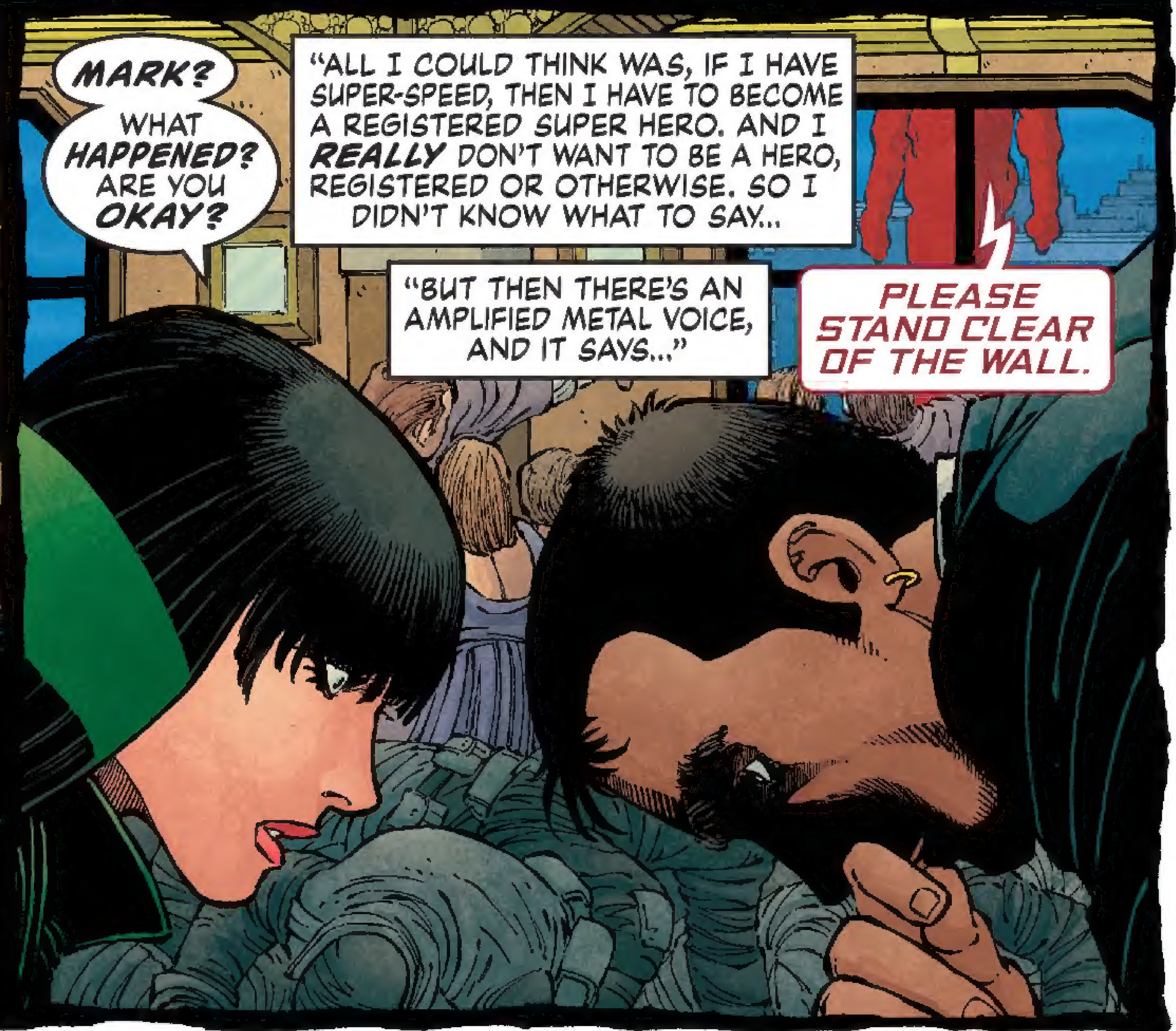



GRACE!
YOU'LL GET YOURSELF KILLED!


HUH?




...


MARK? WHAT HAPPENED? ARE YOU OKAY?
"ALL I COULD THINK WAS, IF I HAVE SUPER-SPEED, THEN I HAVE TO BECOME A REGISTERED SUPER HERO. AND I REALLY DON'T WANT TO BE A HERO, REGISTERED OR OTHERWISE. SO I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...
"BUT THEN THERE'S AN AMPLIFIED METAL VOICE, AND IT SAYS..."
PLEASE STAND CLEAR OF THE WALL.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

"AND THEY TRIED TO TELL HIM, BUT NO ONE KNEW, NOBODY EXCEPT ME. AND I WASN'T TELLING.

"YOU REALIZE I'M PUTTING MYSELF ON THE LINE HERE, TELLING YOU THIS. I LIED TO ***IRON MAN...***"

"I UNDERSTAND. I WON'T TELL ANYONE. GO ON."

"I SAW A KNIFE TURN INTO A FLOWER. I WONDERED IF SOMEONE ELSE AT THE PARTY HAD SUPER-SPEED. IF THEY'D TRADED THEM OVER..."

WHO IS IN CHARGE HERE?

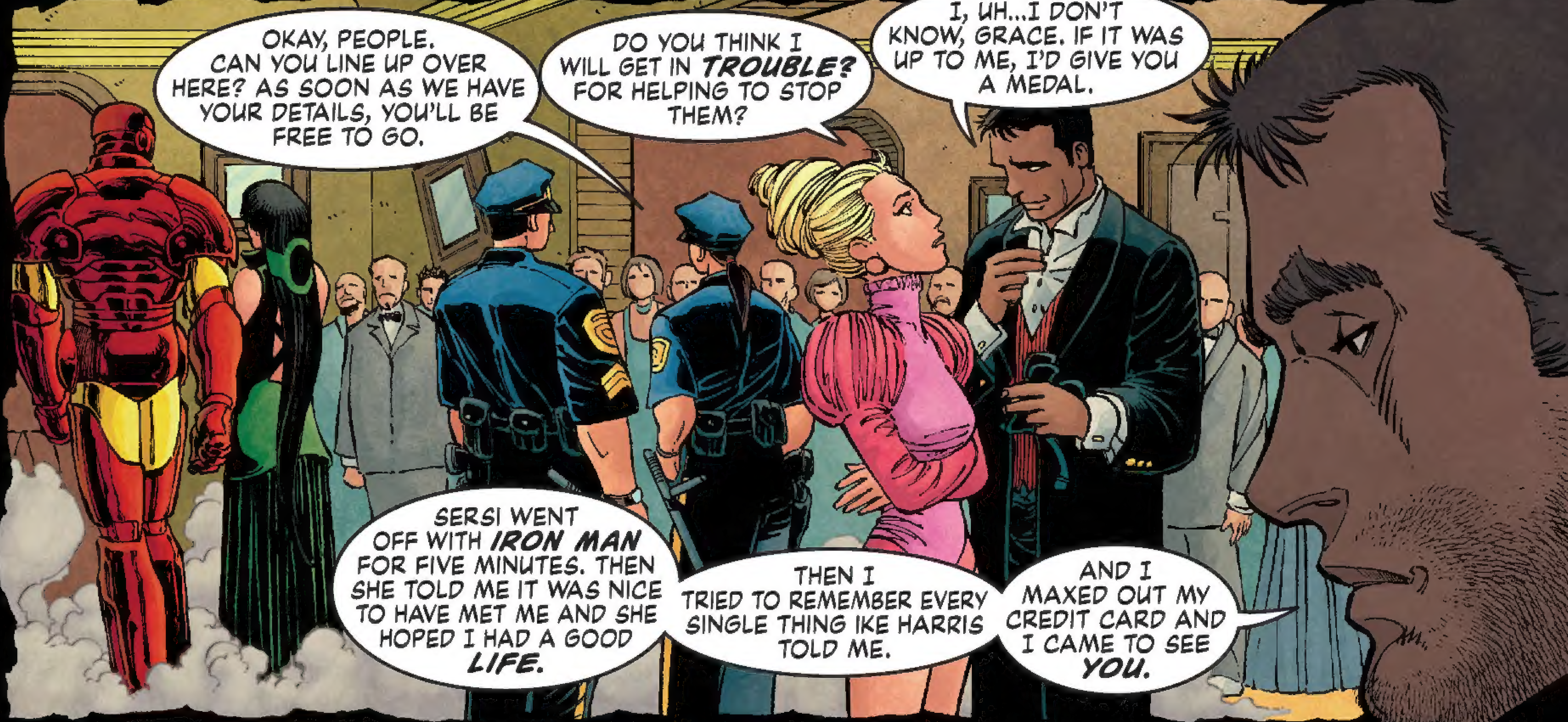
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ***DRUIG.*** I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS...

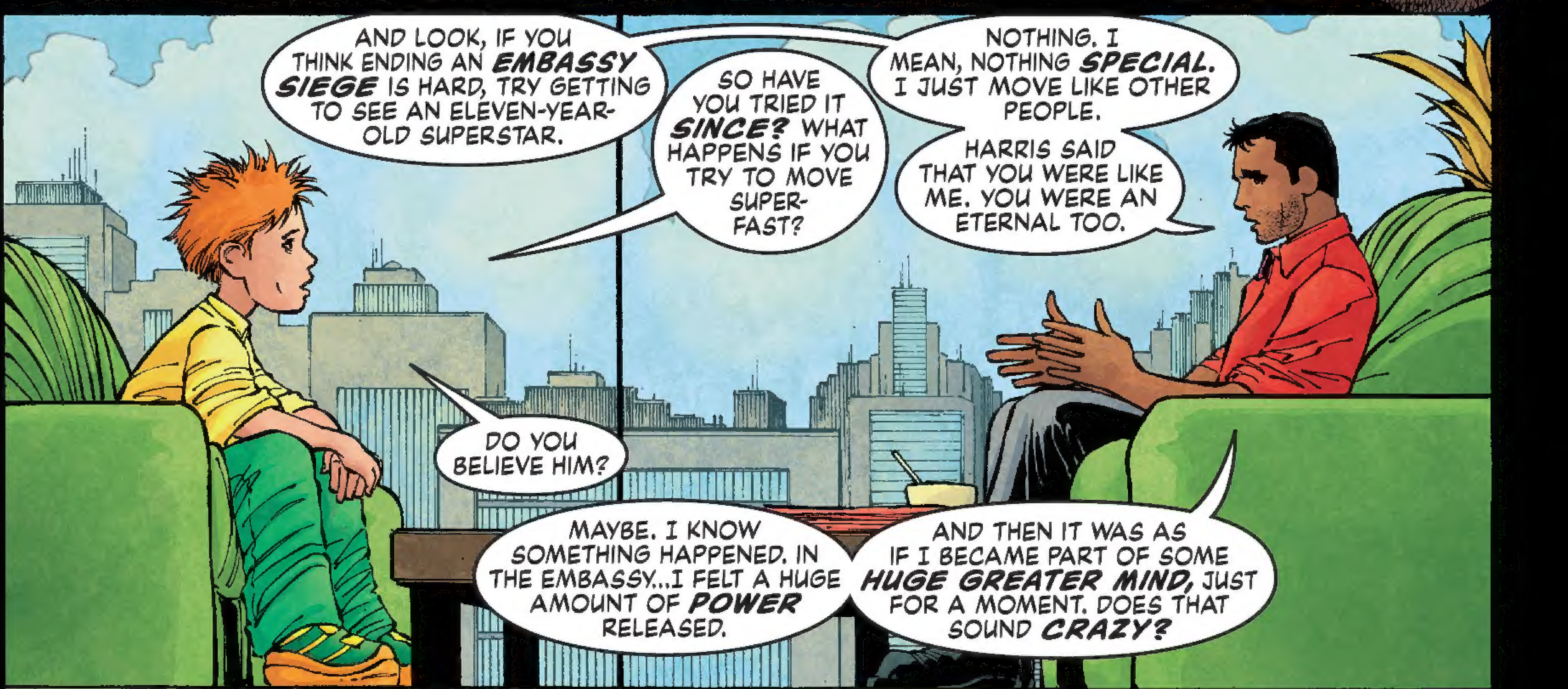
THEY TOOK SOME OF US AWAY ALREADY...

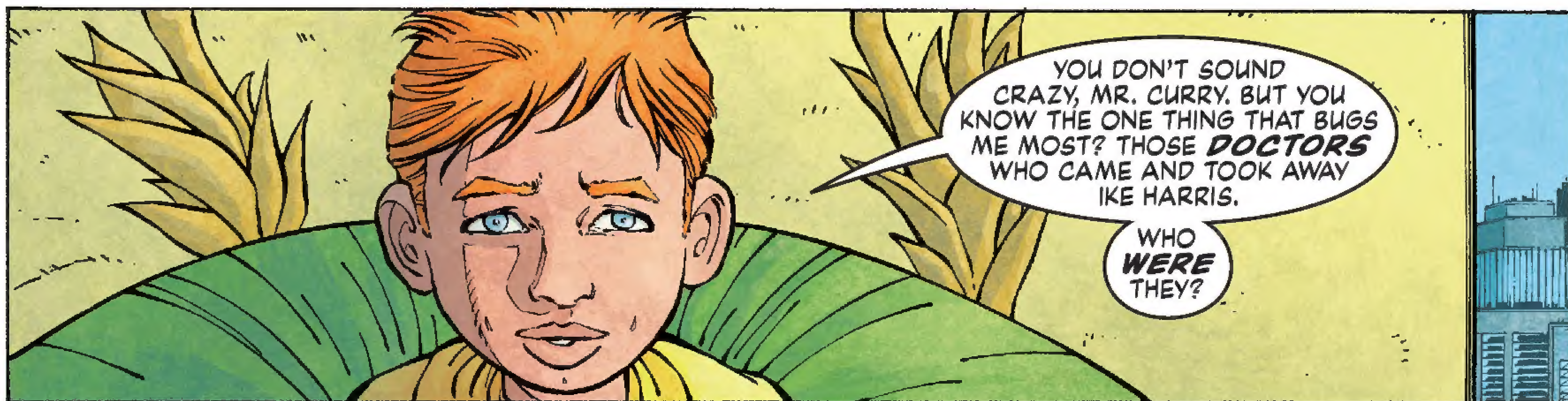
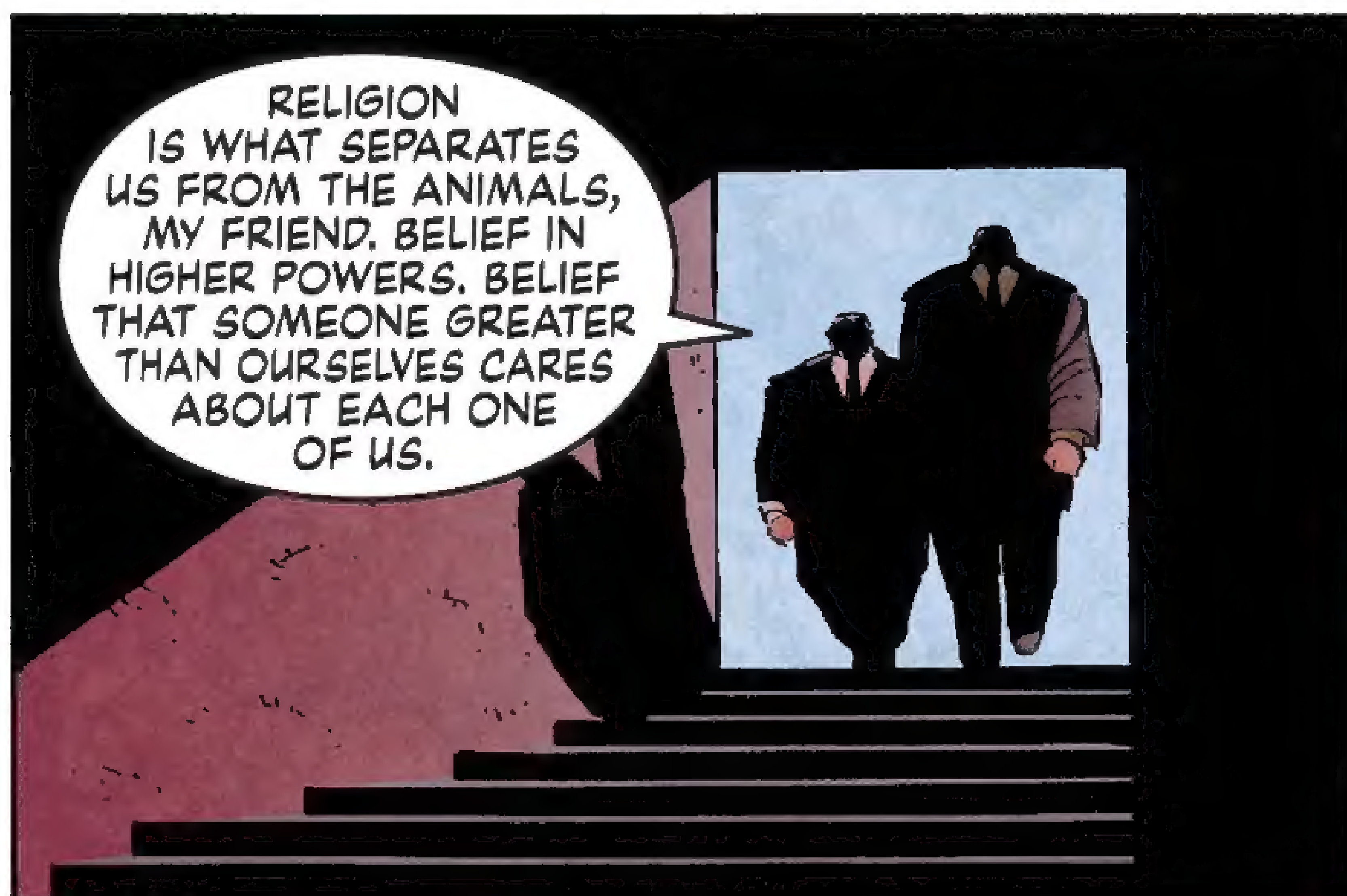
THE ***SCIENTISTS.*** I THINK THEY WERE HEADING FOR THE ROOF.

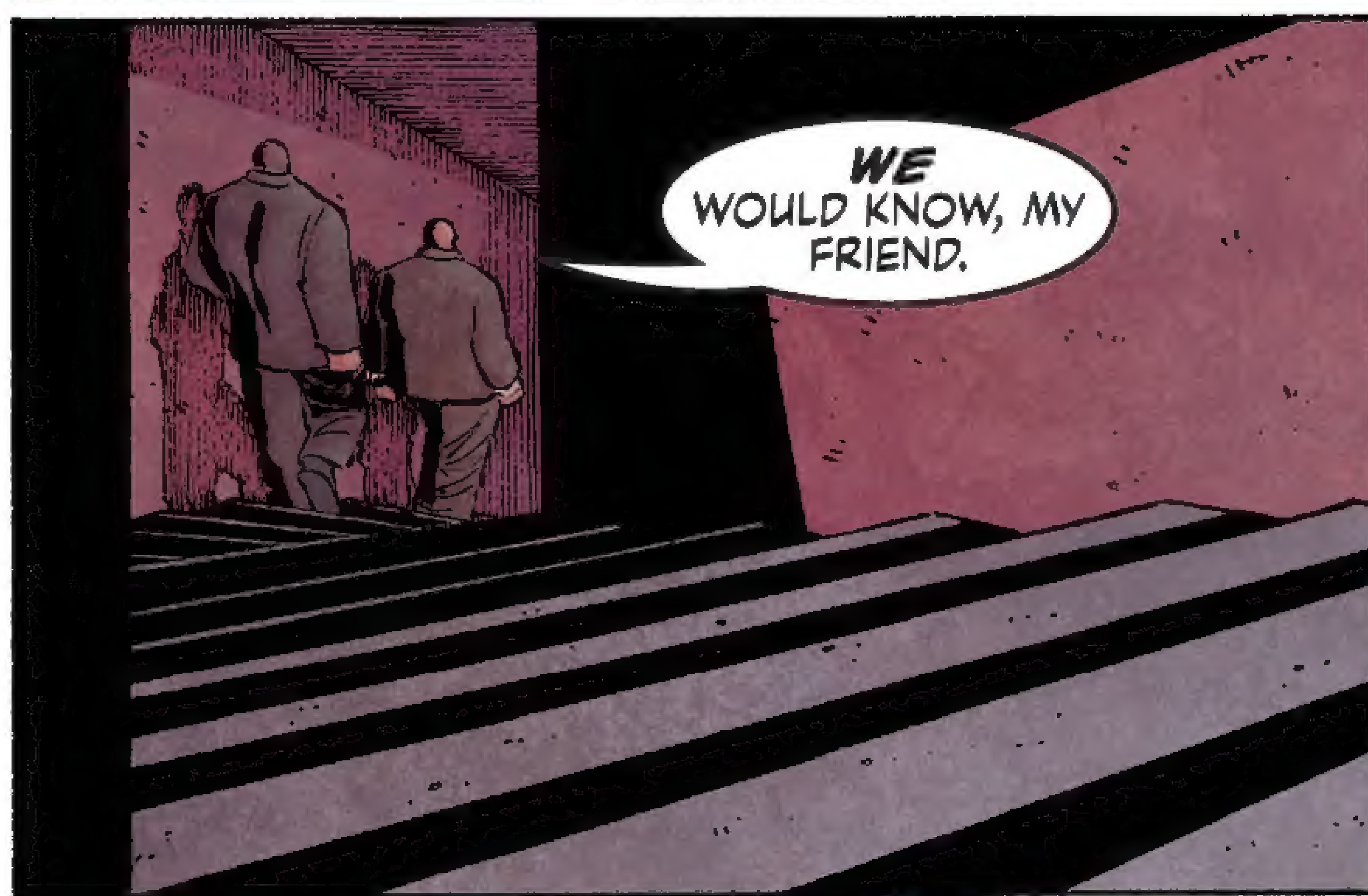
THEY TOOK THENA ELIOT AND--

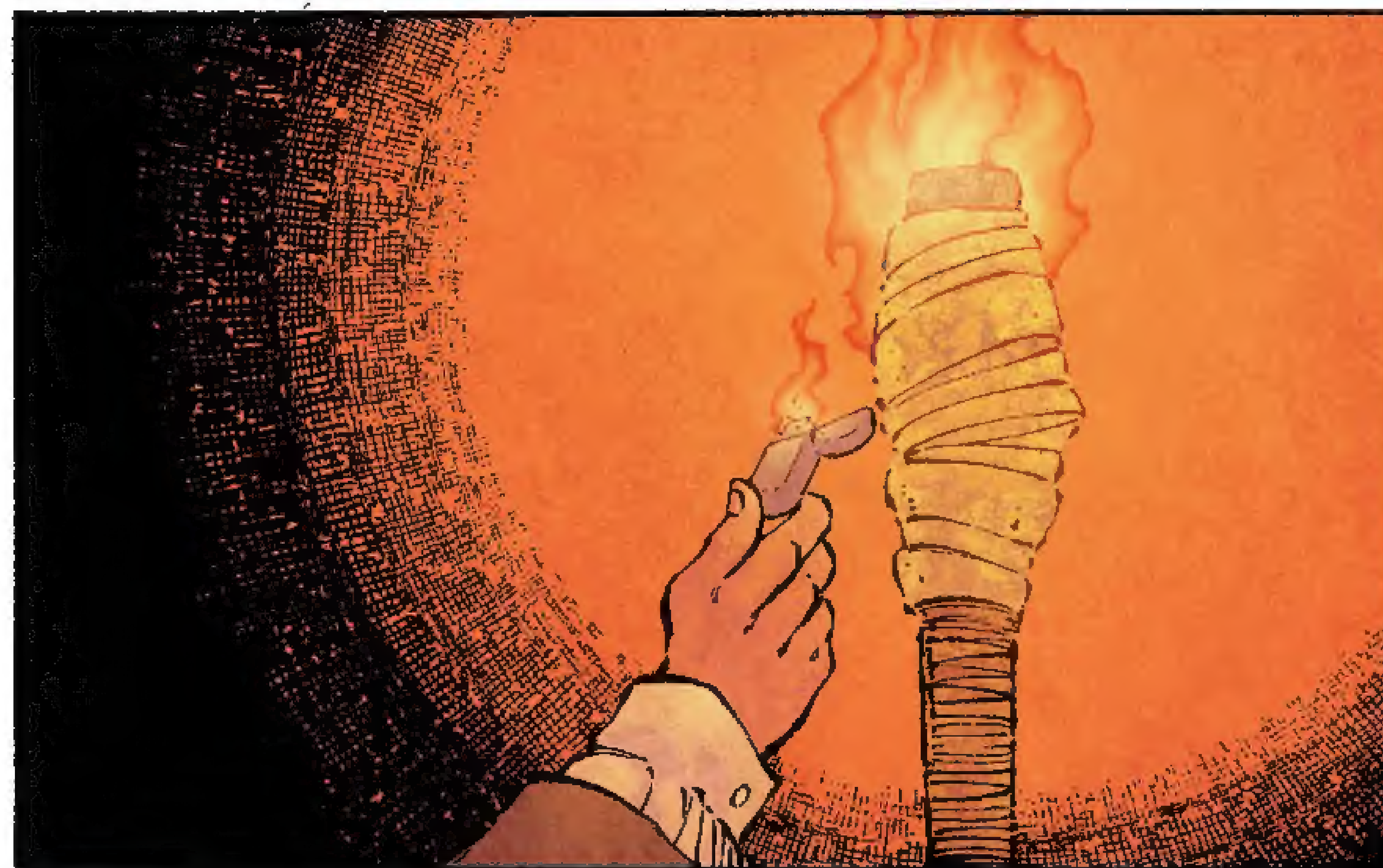
SERSI? ARE YOU OKAY?
I DON'T KNOW. I'M NOT SURE THAT THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO START OUT IN THE PARTY BUSINESS.
POINT TAKEN. LOOK, EVEN IF THE PARTY DIDN'T... WELL, I WAS WONDERING... IF THERE'S ANY POSSIBILITY, IF YOU AND I COULD, MAYBE...
THEY'VE GONE.
MS. SERSI? CAN I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?
UM. SURE.

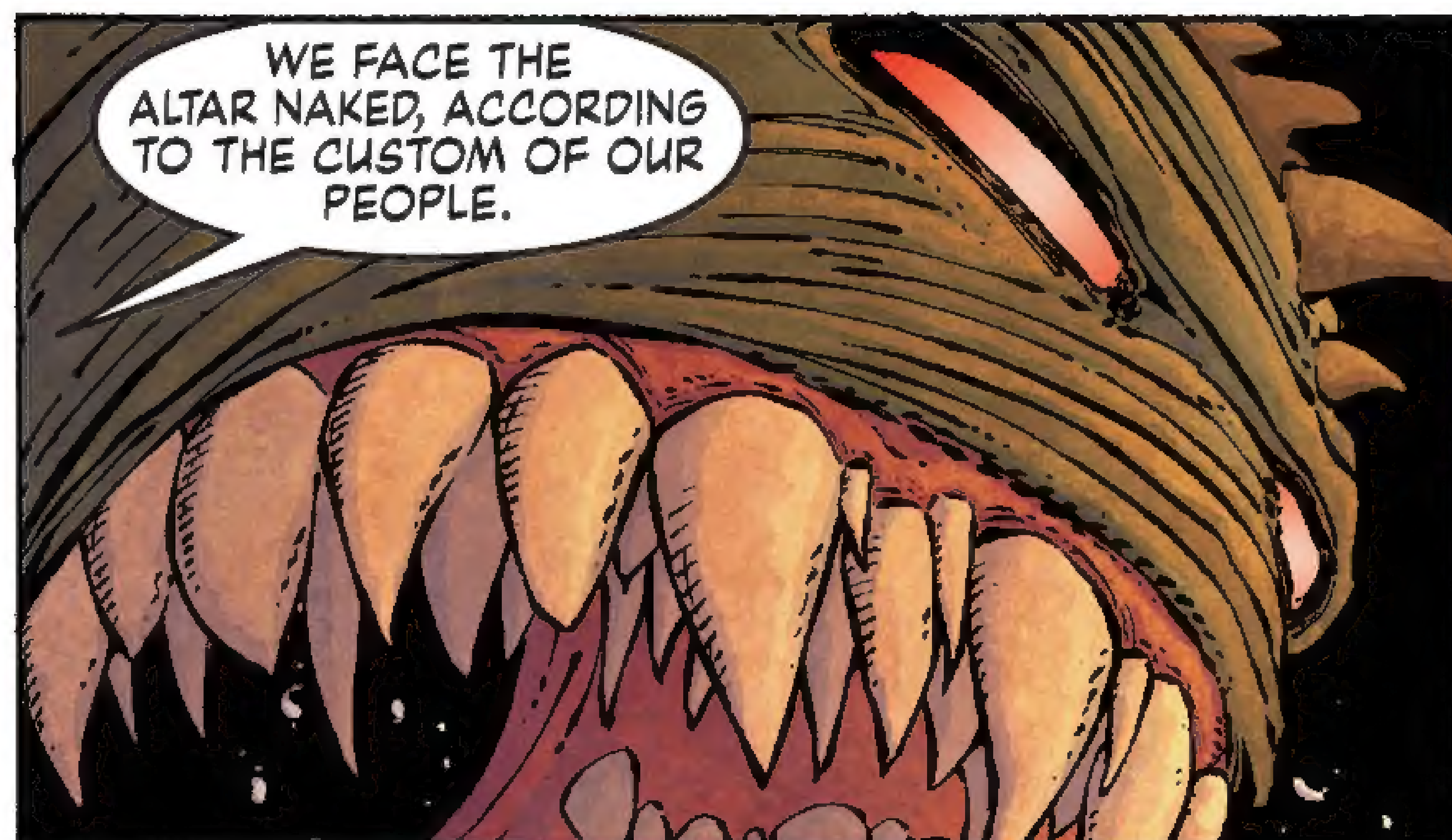





YOU DON'T SOUND CRAZY, MR. CURRY. BUT YOU KNOW THE ONE THING THAT BUGS ME MOST? THOSE DOCTORS WHO CAME AND TOOK AWAY IKE HARRIS.
WHO WERE THEY?

RELIGION IS WHAT SEPARATES US FROM THE ANIMALS, MY FRIEND. BELIEF IN HIGHER POWERS. BELIEF THAT SOMEONE GREATER THAN OURSELVES CARES ABOUT EACH ONE OF US.

AND I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. IF WE LET TODAY'S PRAYERS SLIP, WHO WOULD KNOW?

WE WOULD KNOW, MY FRIEND.

WE WOULD KNOW.



WE FACE THE ALTAR NAKED, ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOM OF OUR PEOPLE.

THE READING TONIGHT IS FROM THE THIRD CHAPTER OF THE BOOK OF KRASK.
AND WHEN THE SECOND HOST DID COME, THERE WAS FIRE IN THE SKY AND GREAT DESTRUCTION.

AND THEN THE GOLDEN ONE, THE GREATEST OF ALL THE CELESTIALS, HE WHO HAD CREATED THE CHANGING PEOPLE AT TIME'S DAWN, HE ROSE UP AGAINST HIS FELLOWS.

LET MY PEOPLE BE, HE SAID. FOR DID I NOT GIVE THEM DOMINION OVER THE EARTH AND ALL THAT IS UPON IT?

BUT THE OTHER CELESTIALS TURNED ON HIM, AND TRICKED HIM.

THEY SWORE TO HIM THAT THEY WOULD LEAVE THE CHANGING PEOPLE IN PEACE.

THEY WERE OATH-BREAKERS THEN, AND THUS IT IS WRITTEN, THE OATH OF A CELESTIAL IS WRITTEN ON THE WINDS OF SPACE.

HE SHONE LIKE THE SUN, BUT AFTER THEY BETRAYED HIM, HE WAS BLACKER THAN TAR. THEY BURIED HIM, FOR THEY COULD NOT KILL HIM. BENEATH THE EARTH OUR DEAD LORD LIES DREAMING.

YET ALL THINGS CHANGE.

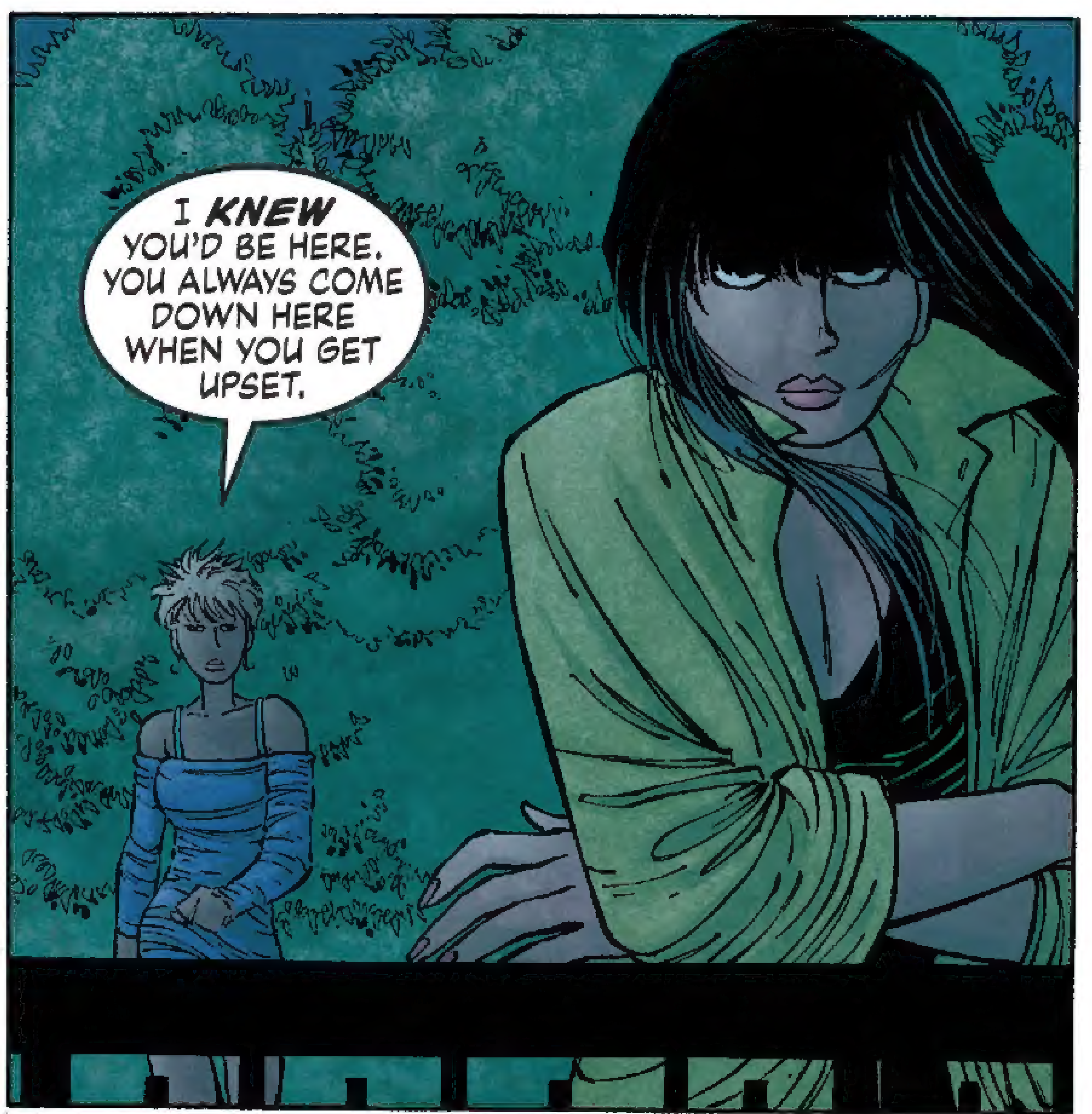
Yet all things change.

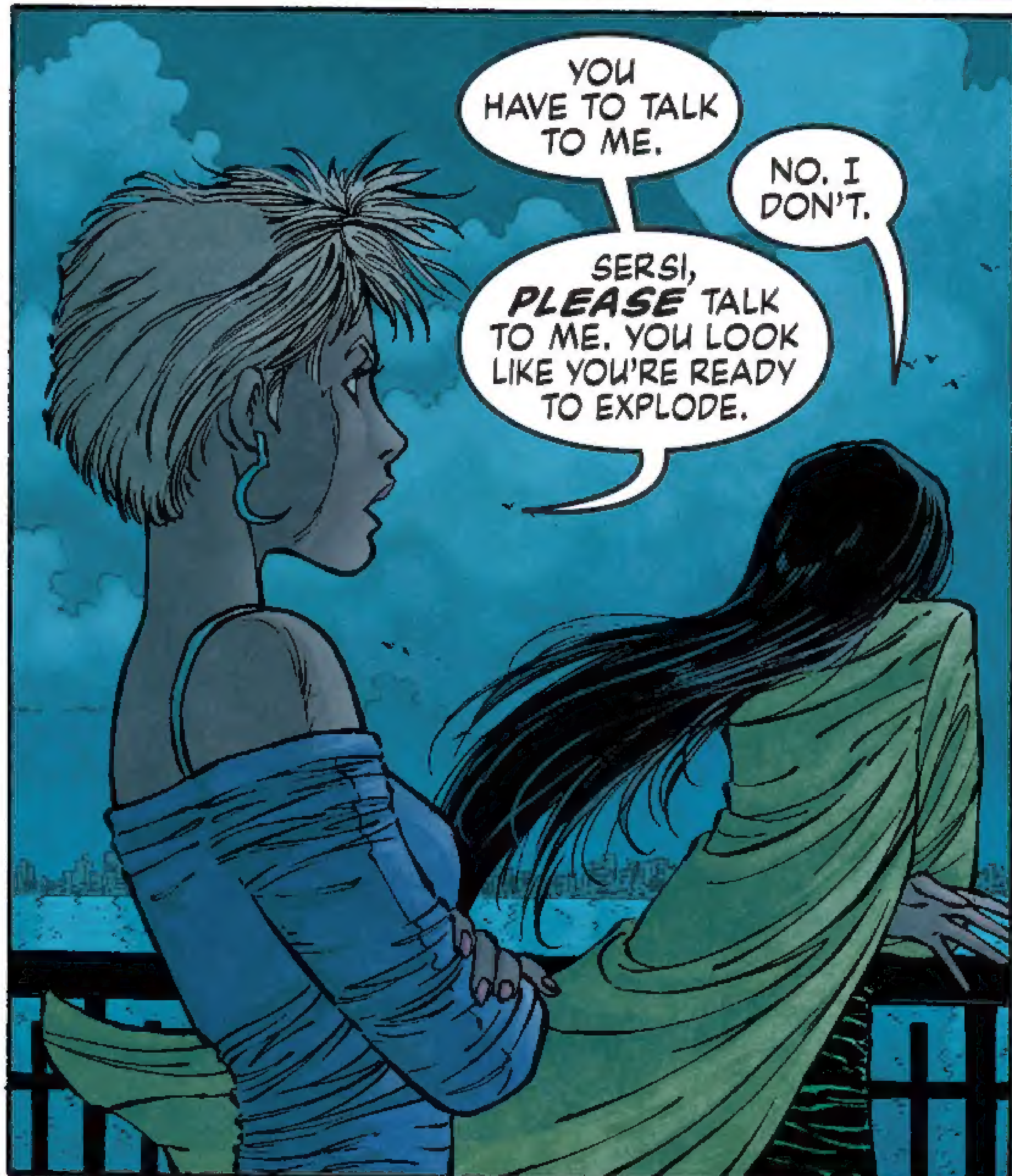
AND **HE** SHALL RISE, AS, ONE DAY, WE ALSO SHALL RISE. **WE** ARE THE CHANGING PEOPLE.

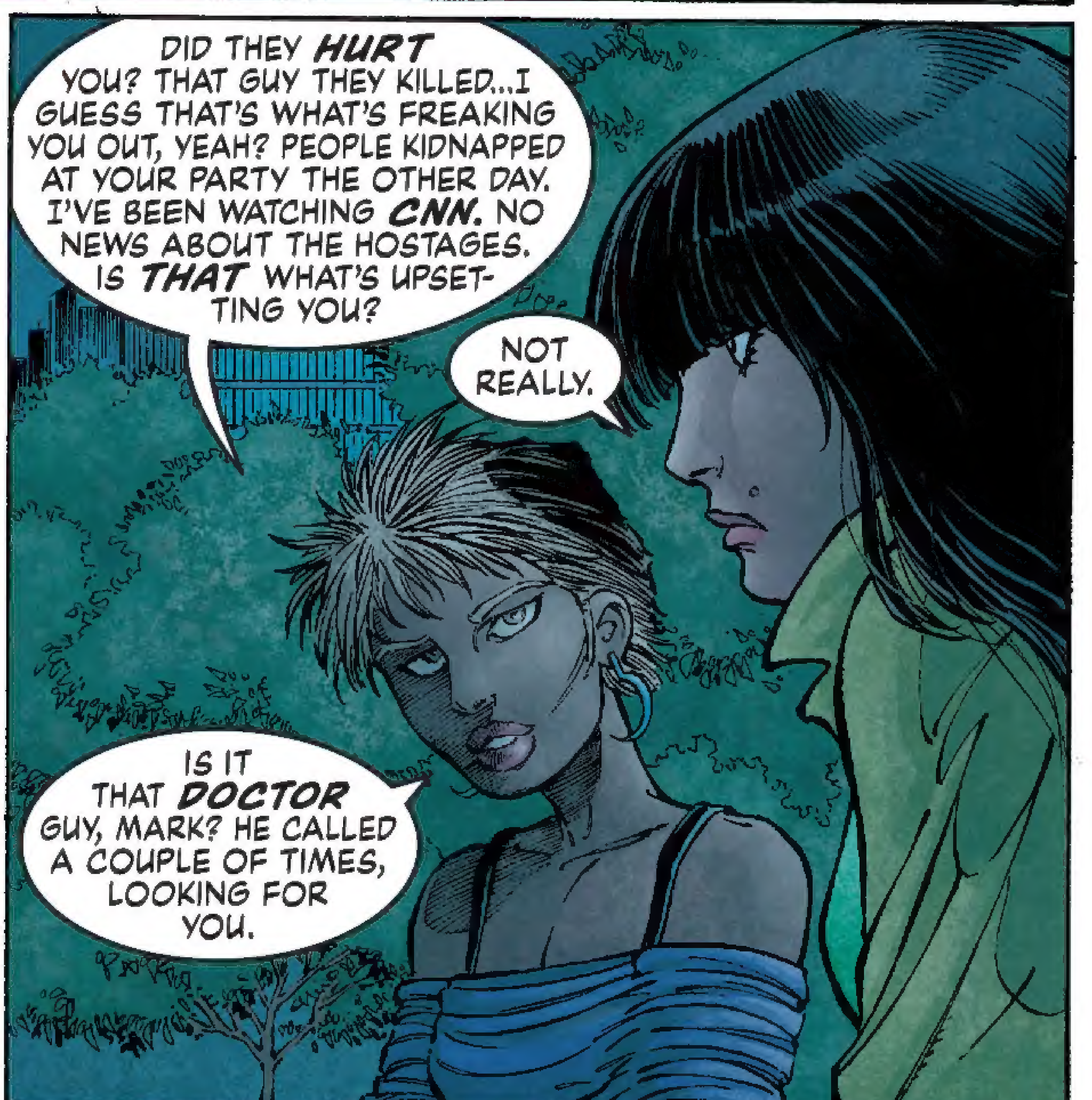
WE **CURSE** THE CELESTIALS WHO SCATTERED US, AND WE PRAY TO HE WHO SLEEPS IN DARKNESS TO PRESERVE US AND KEEP US. UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD.

Until the End of the World.




I **KNEW** YOU'D BE HERE. YOU ALWAYS COME DOWN HERE WHEN YOU GET UPSET.


YOU HAVE TO TALK TO ME.
NO. I DON'T.
SERSI, **PLEASE** TALK TO ME. YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE READY TO EXPLODE.

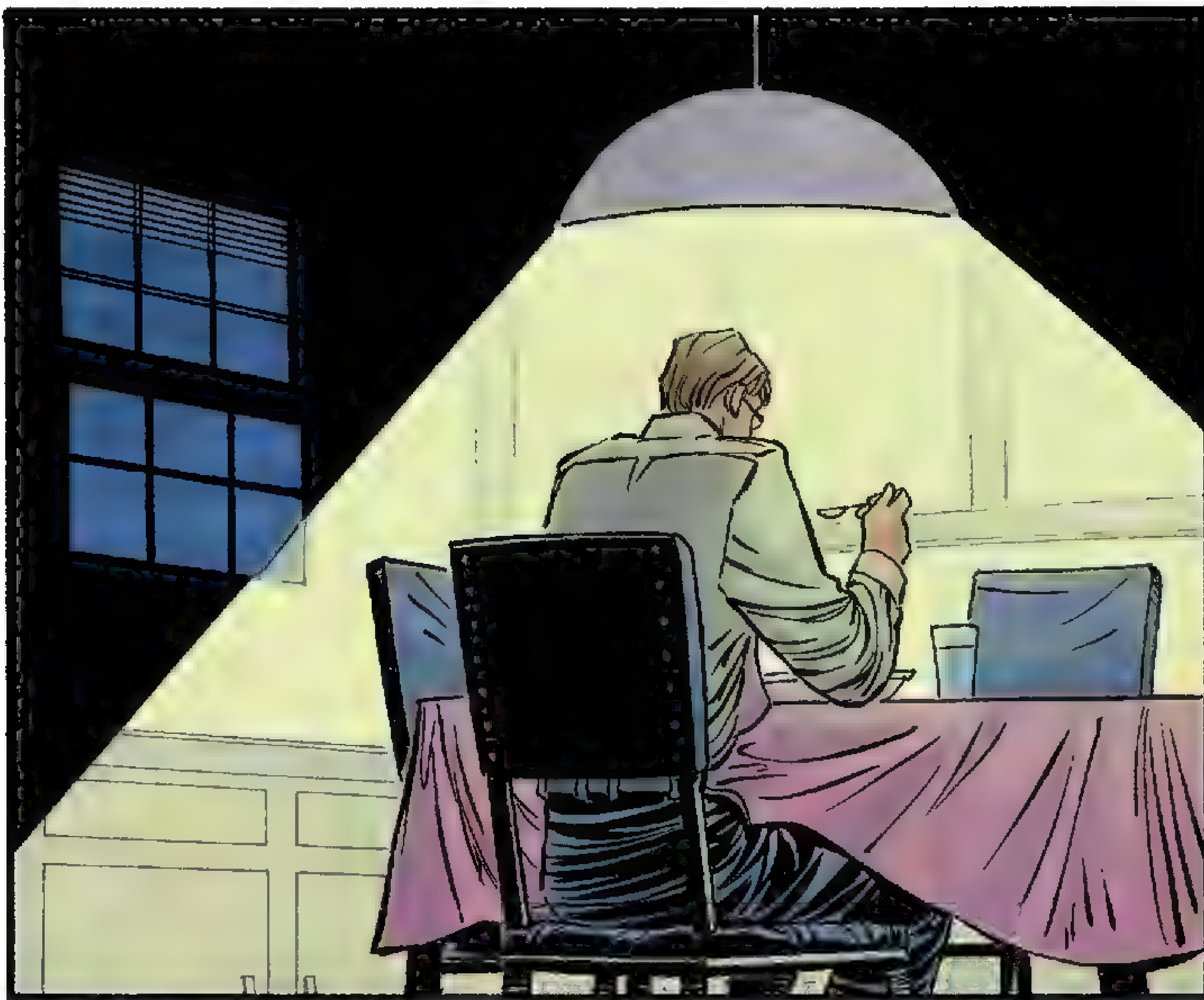

DID THEY **HURT** YOU? THAT GUY THEY KILLED...I GUESS THAT'S WHAT'S FREAKING YOU OUT, YEAH? PEOPLE KIDNAPPED AT YOUR PARTY THE OTHER DAY. I'VE BEEN WATCHING **CNN.** NO NEWS ABOUT THE HOSTAGES. IS **THAT** WHAT'S UPSET-TING YOU?
NOT REALLY.
IS IT THAT **DOCTOR** GUY, MARK? HE CALLED A COUPLE OF TIMES, LOOKING FOR YOU.


LEAVE IT.


MS. SERSI, CAN I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?

OBVIOUSLY, I APPRECIATE YOUR ASSISTANCE HERE, TONIGHT. I SHOULD POINT OUT, THOUGH, THAT, AS A FORMER AVENGER, IT'S YOUR DUTY TO GET REGISTERED, OR TO FACE ANY POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES.
BUT I'M NOT A...A FORMER AVENGER...
YOU'RE SAYING THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FORMER AVENGER? ALL THE MORE REASON TO--
I'M SAYING I'M NOT A SUPER HERO.
I DON'T HAVE ANY SPECIAL POWERS, AND I'VE NEVER BEEN IN THE AVENGERS.
VERY WELL. IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT TO PLAY IT.
BUT SERSI, YOU CAN'T STAY NEUTRAL FOREVER. YOU NEED TO DECIDE WHOSE SIDE YOU'RE ON.
WHEN YOU WANT TO TALK, I'LL BE AROUND.
ABI...
...WHAT IF IT TURNS OUT I REALLY AM SOME KIND OF FREAK?
THEN I'LL TELL BANANA SPLITZ TODD AND HE'LL BREAK OUT THE CHAMPAGNE.
I'LL TELL YOU WHEN I'M READY. OKAY?



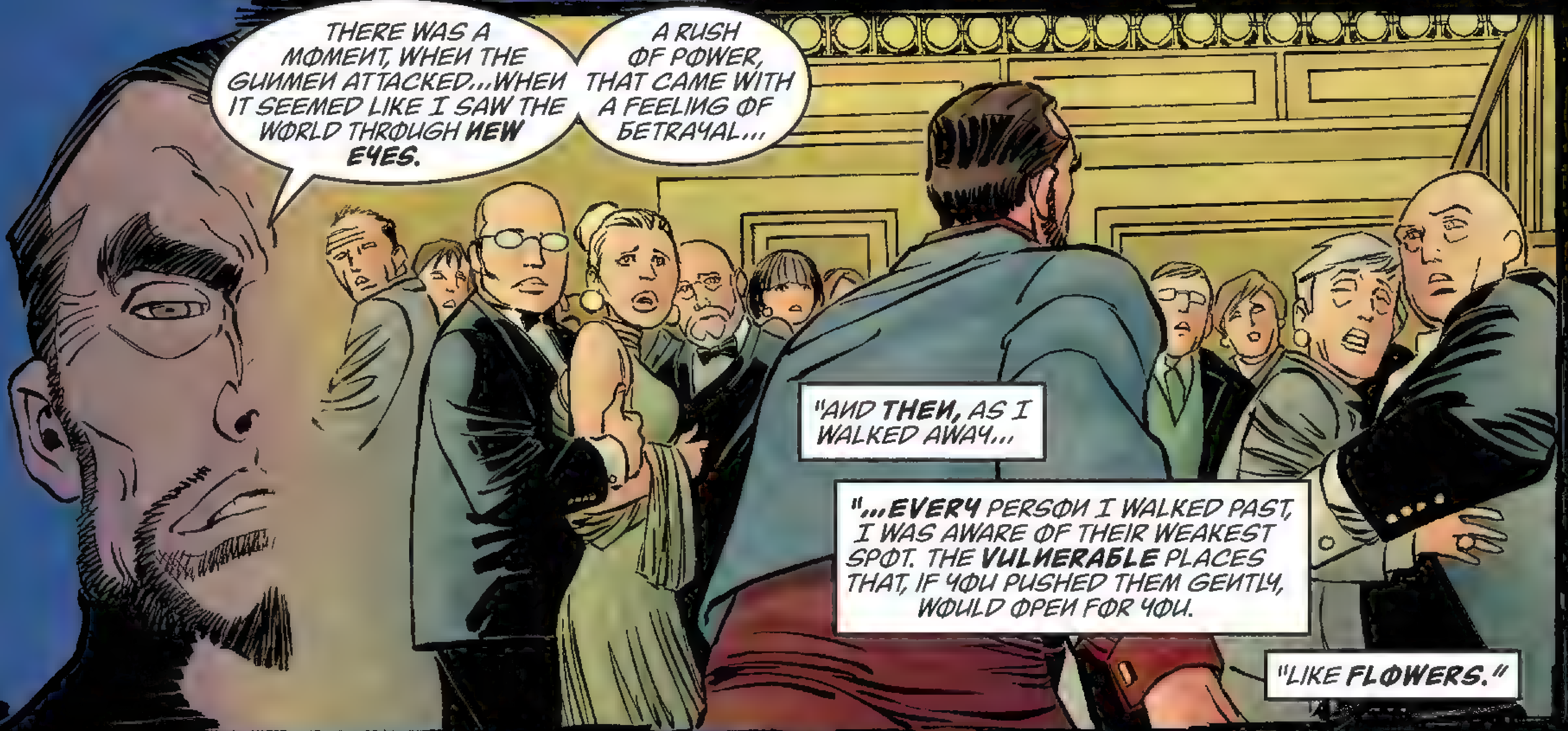





HELLO, PRYKRISH.

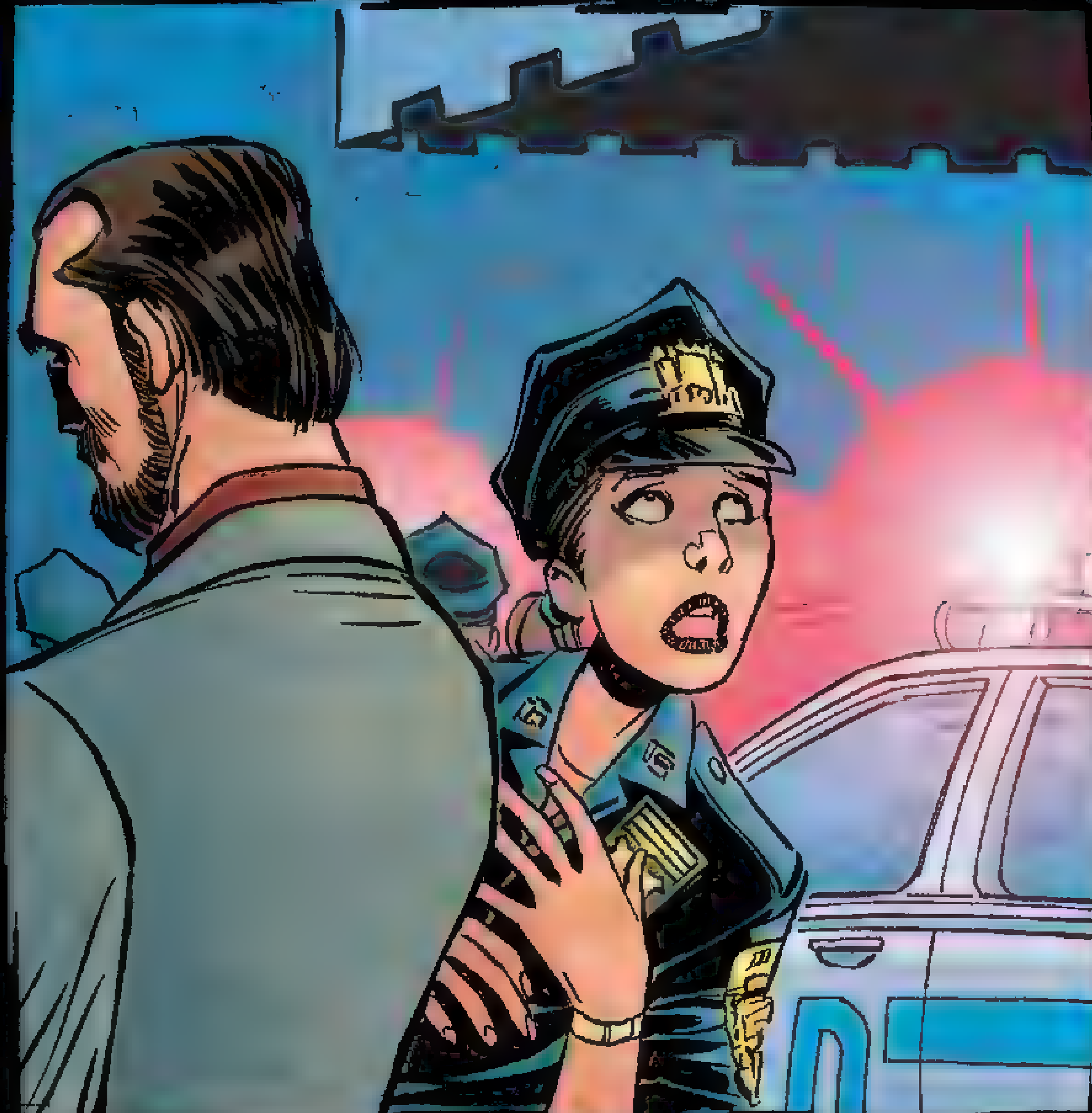

DRUIG? HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE? WE'VE BEEN SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU...YOU VANISHED...
I DID.


WE WERE **LOOKING** FOR YOU, AFTER THE PARTY...
I DECIDED TO LEAVE EARLY. TO AVOID QUESTIONS. THE POLICE. THE SECURITY GUARDS. I SIMPLY **DECIDED** THEY WOULD NOT **SEE** ME. AND THEY **DID NOT** SEE ME. I LEFT...

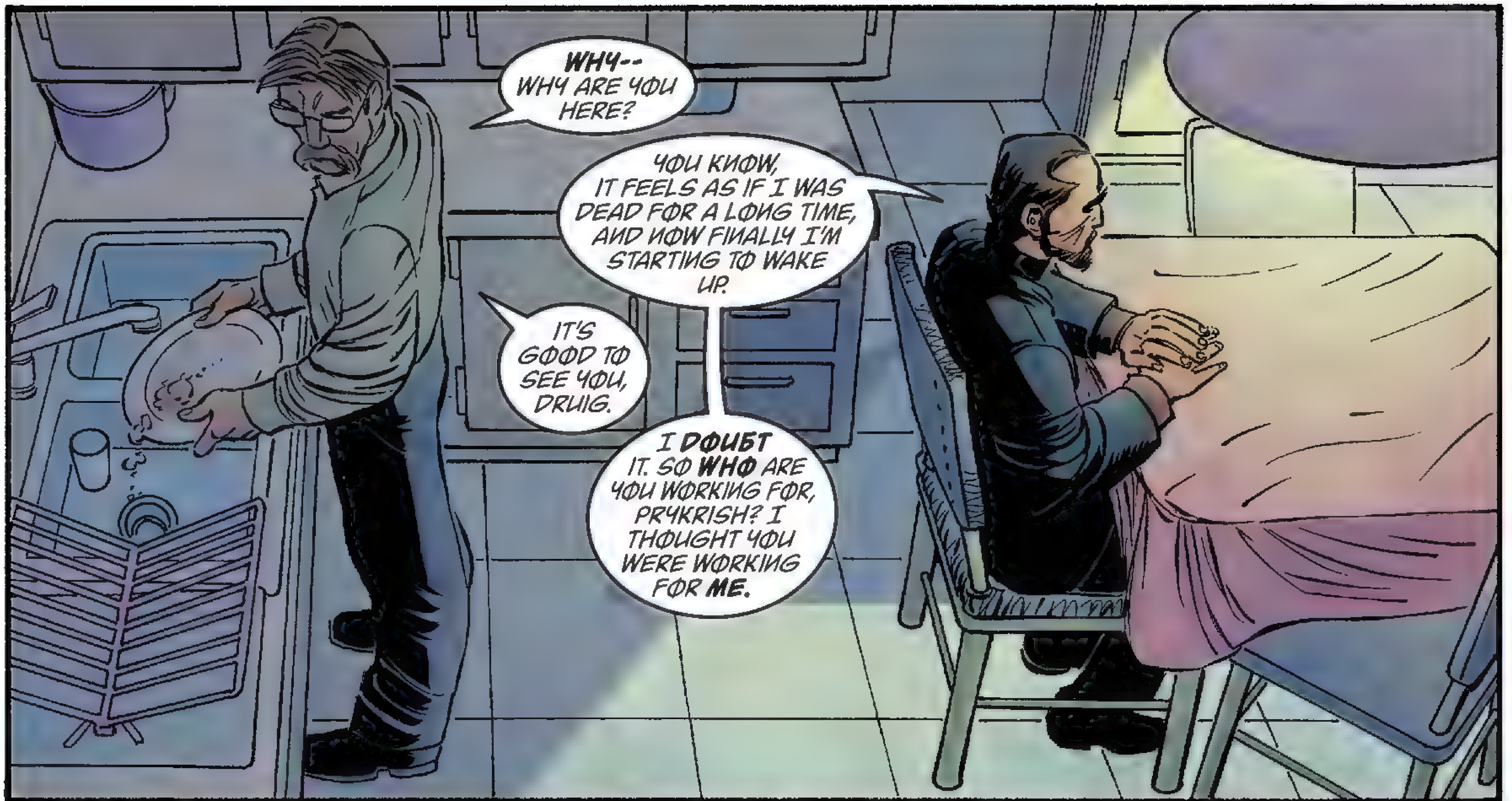

THERE WAS A MOMENT, WHEN THE GUNMEN ATTACKED...WHEN IT SEEMED LIKE I SAW THE WORLD THROUGH NEW EYES.
A RUSH OF POWER, THAT CAME WITH A FEELING OF BETRAYAL...
"AND THEN, AS I WALKED AWAY...
"...EVERY PERSON I WALKED PAST, I WAS AWARE OF THEIR WEAKEST SPOT. THE VULNERABLE PLACES THAT, IF YOU PUSHED THEM GENTLY, WOULD OPEN FOR YOU.
"LIKE FLOWERS."


EXCUSE ME, SIR. WE'RE CORDONING OFF THE AREA UNTIL EVERY-ONE INSIDE IS ACCOUNTED FOR...
VOROZHEIKAN EMBASSY


YES. TELL ME, IS IT THE SLIME OF THE TENTACLES THAT UPSETS YOU OR THE WAY THEY TWINE BONELESSLY, THE FACELESS SNAKING OF THEM...
...DOES IT REMIND YOU OF THE WAY YOUR BROTHER FORCED A RUBBER TOY INTO YOUR INFANT MOUTH, CHOKING YOU, THE WET, THE...




INTERESTING.


WHY--
WHY ARE YOU HERE?
YOU KNOW, IT FEELS AS IF I WAS DEAD FOR A LONG TIME, AND NOW FINALLY I'M STARTING TO WAKE UP.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, DRUIG.
I DOUBT IT. SO WHO ARE YOU WORKING FOR, PRYKRISH? I THOUGHT YOU WERE WORKING FOR ME.


I AM WORKING FOR YOU...ONLY FOR YOU...


NONSENSE. YOU BETRAYED ME, PRYKRISH-- WHO ARE YOU WORKING FOR? AND WHERE ARE THE SCIENTISTS? I THINK THEY WILL WORK FOR DRUIG, NOW. NOT FOR VOROZHEIKA. I HAVE BEEN THINKING TOO SMALL.
I WILL TELL YOU NOTHING. STAND UP.




ARE YOU WONDERING WHAT YOU WILL DO WITH MY BODY, ONCE YOU HAVE SHOT ME?
POOR PRYKRISH. IT IS SUCH A GOOD THING YOUR MOTHER DID NOT CATCH YOU WEARING HER CLOTHES, ISN'T IT?





"MUCH TOO EASY. WHERE ARE THE SCIENTISTS?"
















THEY FEED HER ONCE A DAY.


THIS WILL BE HER THIRD MEAL SINCE THEY BROUGHT HER HERE.

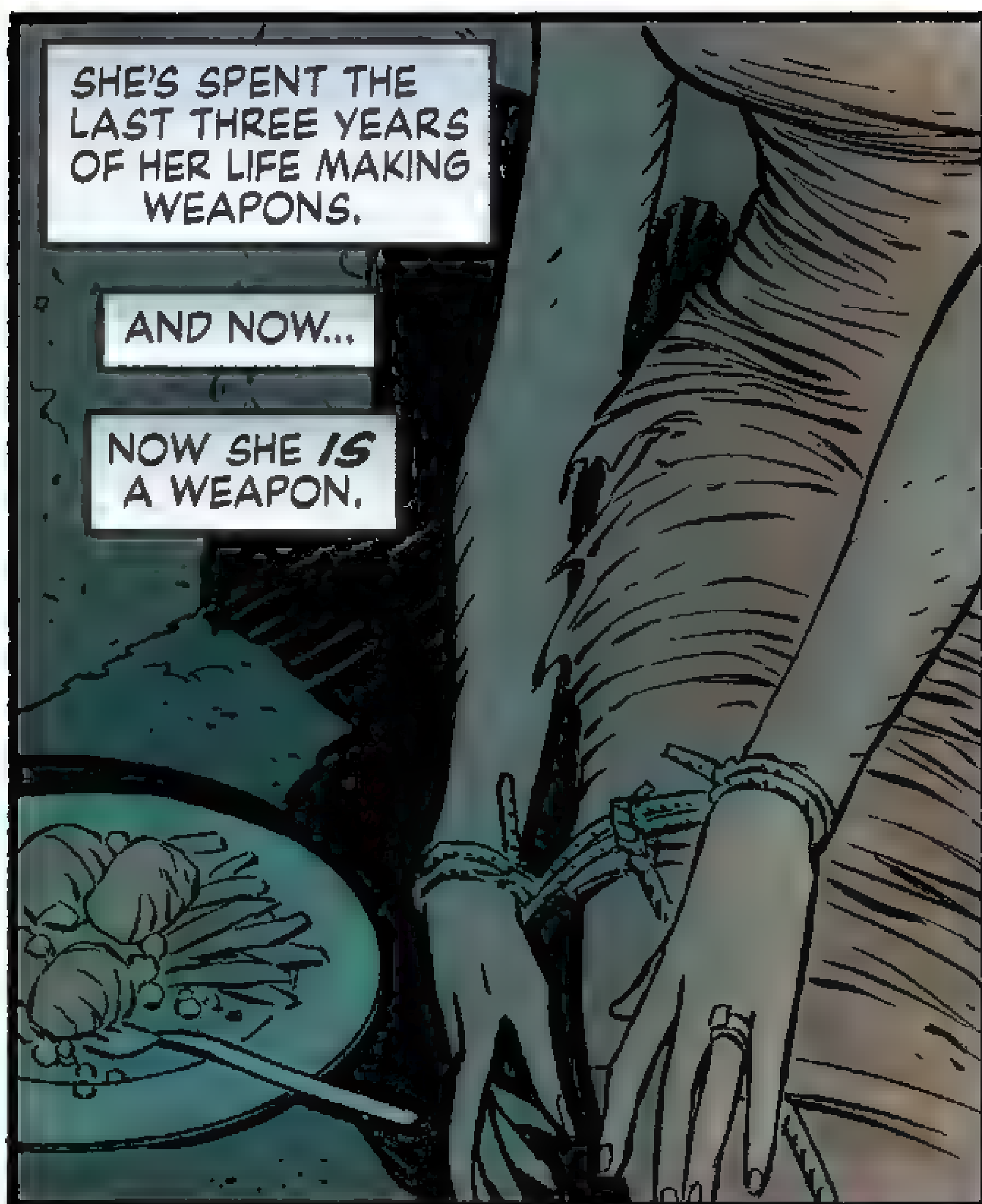

ONE OF THEM ALWAYS KEEPS HER COVERED, WHILE THE OTHER PUTS THE FOOD IN FRONT OF HER.
PLEASE. I HAVE A YOUNG SON. YOU PEOPLE...
...YOU KILLED MY HUSBAND. I HAVE TO GET TO MY **BOY.**


LOOK. I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE. I ***CAN'T*** REPORT YOU. JUST LET ME ***GO.***
JOEY. MY SON. I'VE GOT A PHOTO IN MY PURSE. IF YOU LOOK AT THE PHOTO, MAYBE YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.


DON'T YOU HAVE CHILDREN?
DO YOU SPEAK ANY ENGLISH?

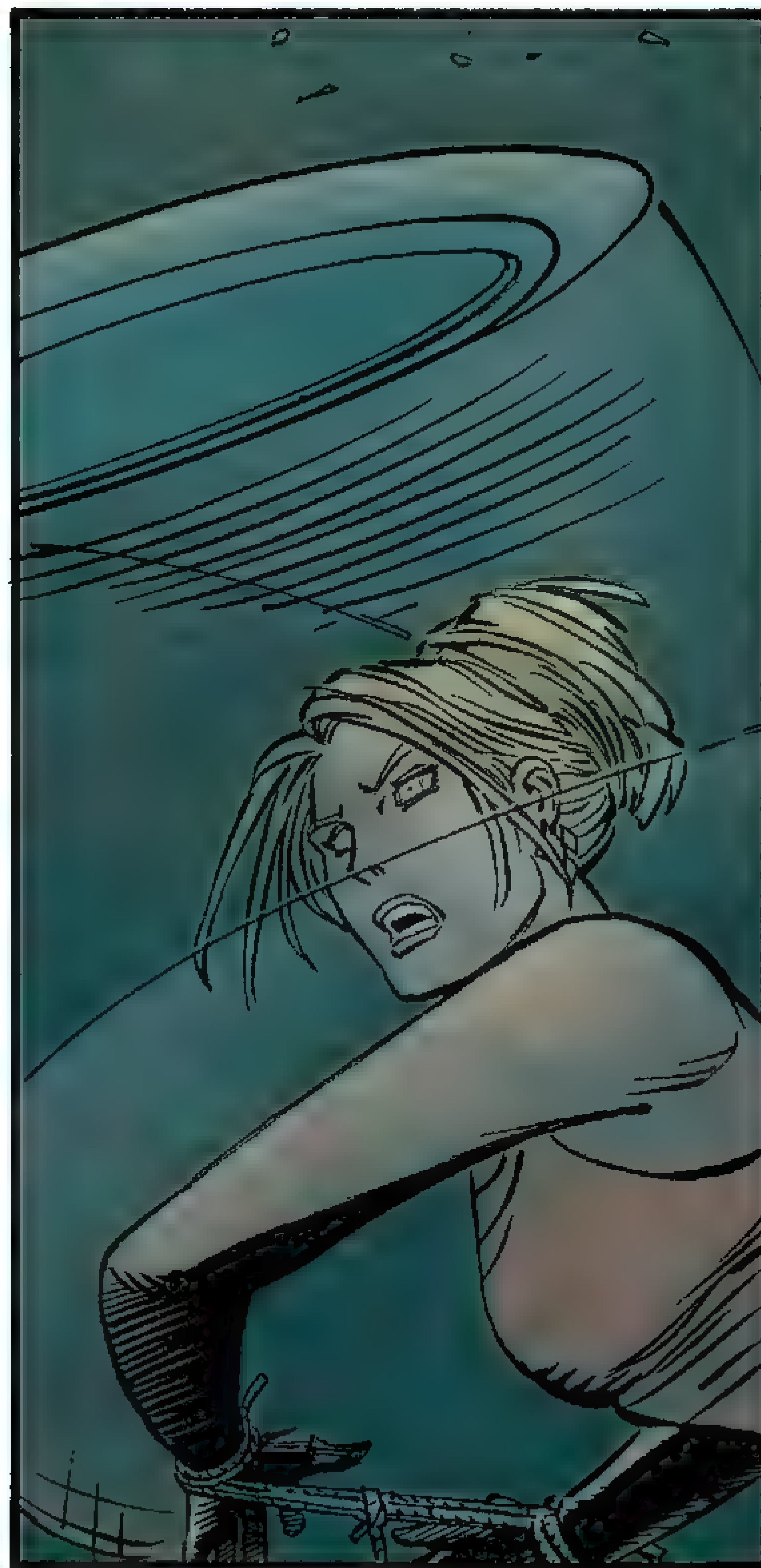

IT'S LIKE MADNESS, SHE THINKS SUDDENLY, *IF MADNESS WERE FOCUSED.*
SHE'S USED TO BEING SMART. BUT HER HEAD IS CHANGING--STRATEGIES AND TACTICS PRESENT THEMSELVES...

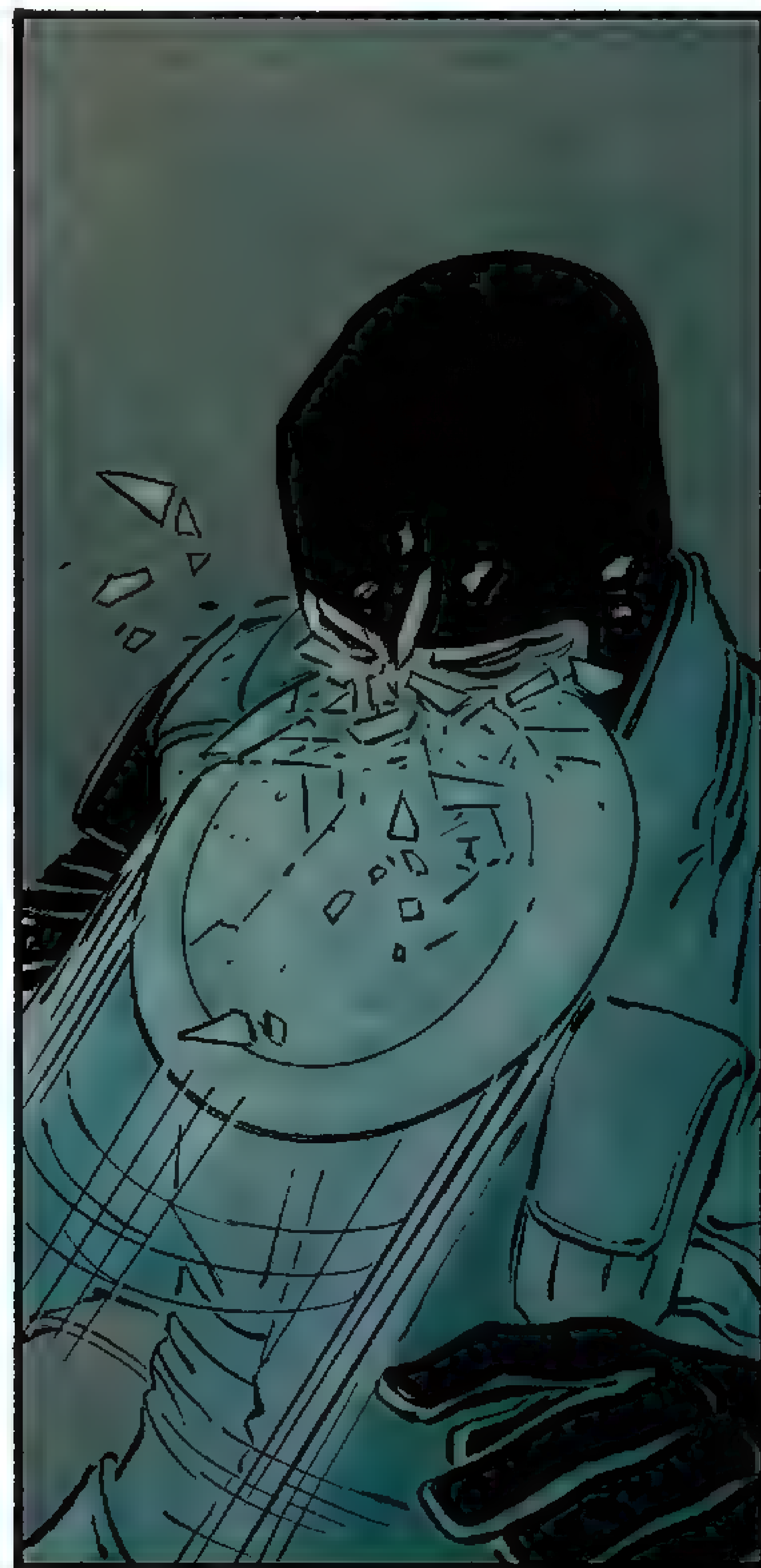

...ARE REJECTED OR ACCEPTED, FASTER THAN SHE CAN COPE WITH ON A CONSCIOUS LEVEL.

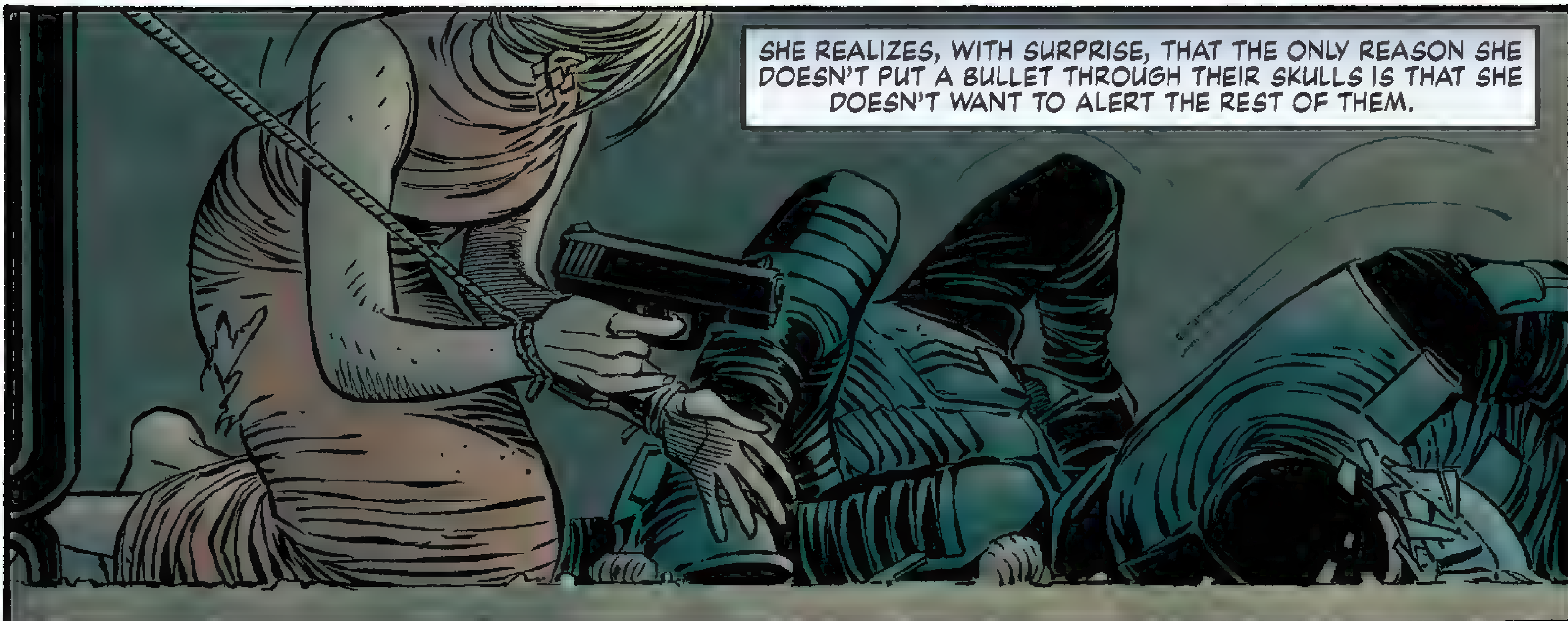

SHE'S SPENT THE LAST THREE YEARS OF HER LIFE MAKING WEAPONS.
AND NOW...
NOW SHE *IS* A WEAPON.

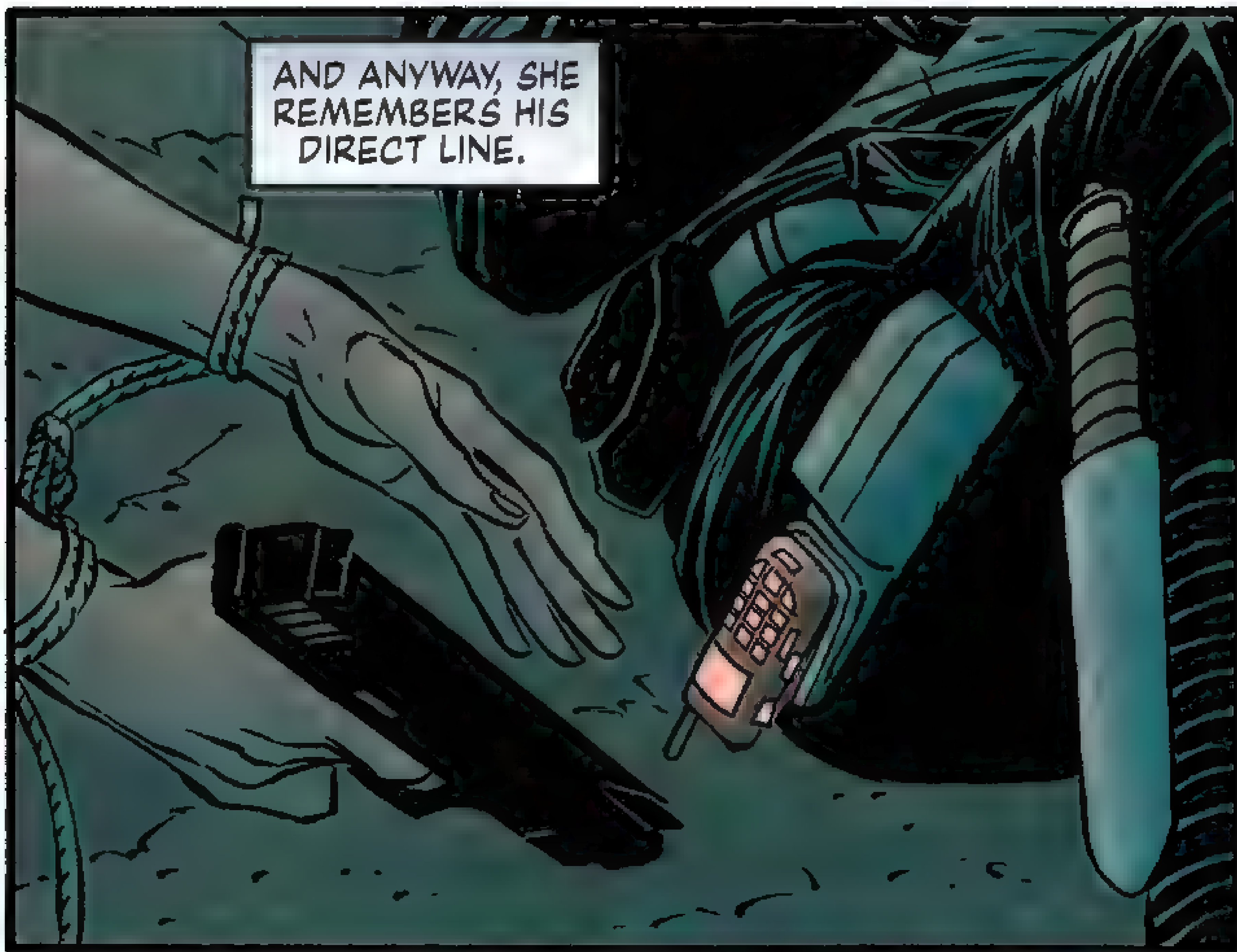


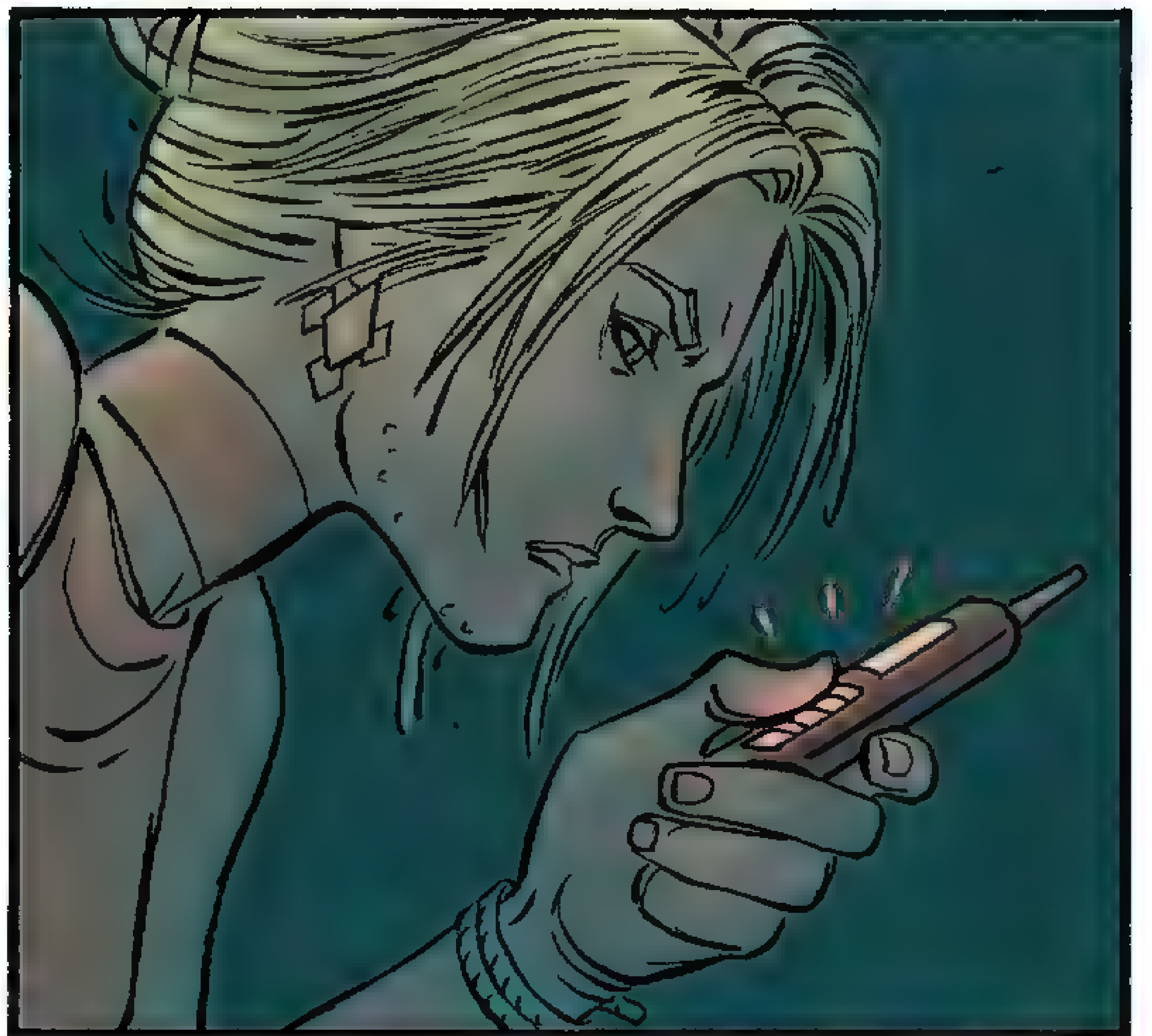




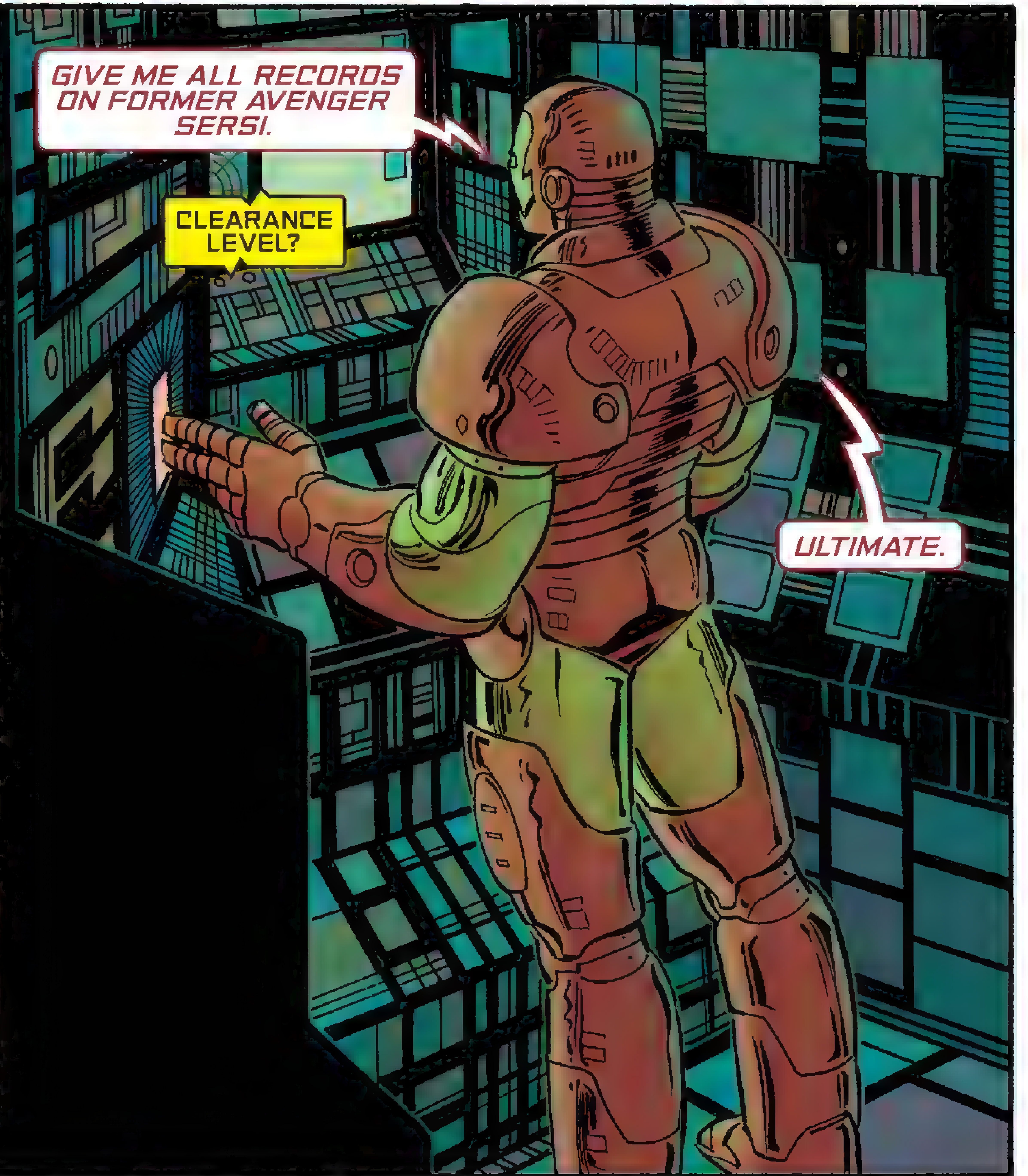


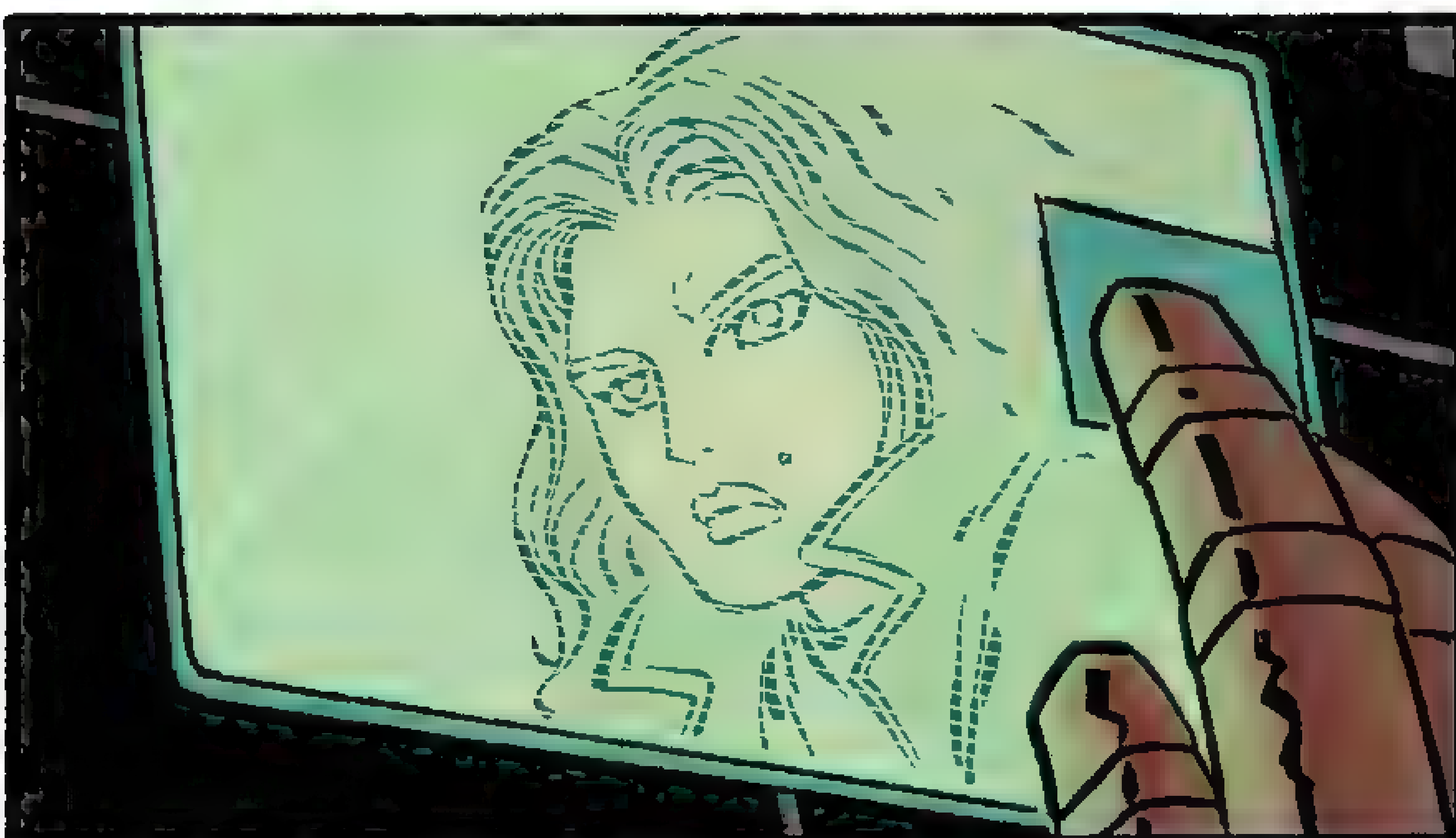

SHE REALIZES, WITH SURPRISE, THAT THE ONLY REASON SHE DOESN'T PUT A BULLET THROUGH THEIR SKULLS IS THAT SHE DOESN'T WANT TO ALERT THE REST OF THEM.


AND ANYWAY, SHE REMEMBERS HIS DIRECT LINE.

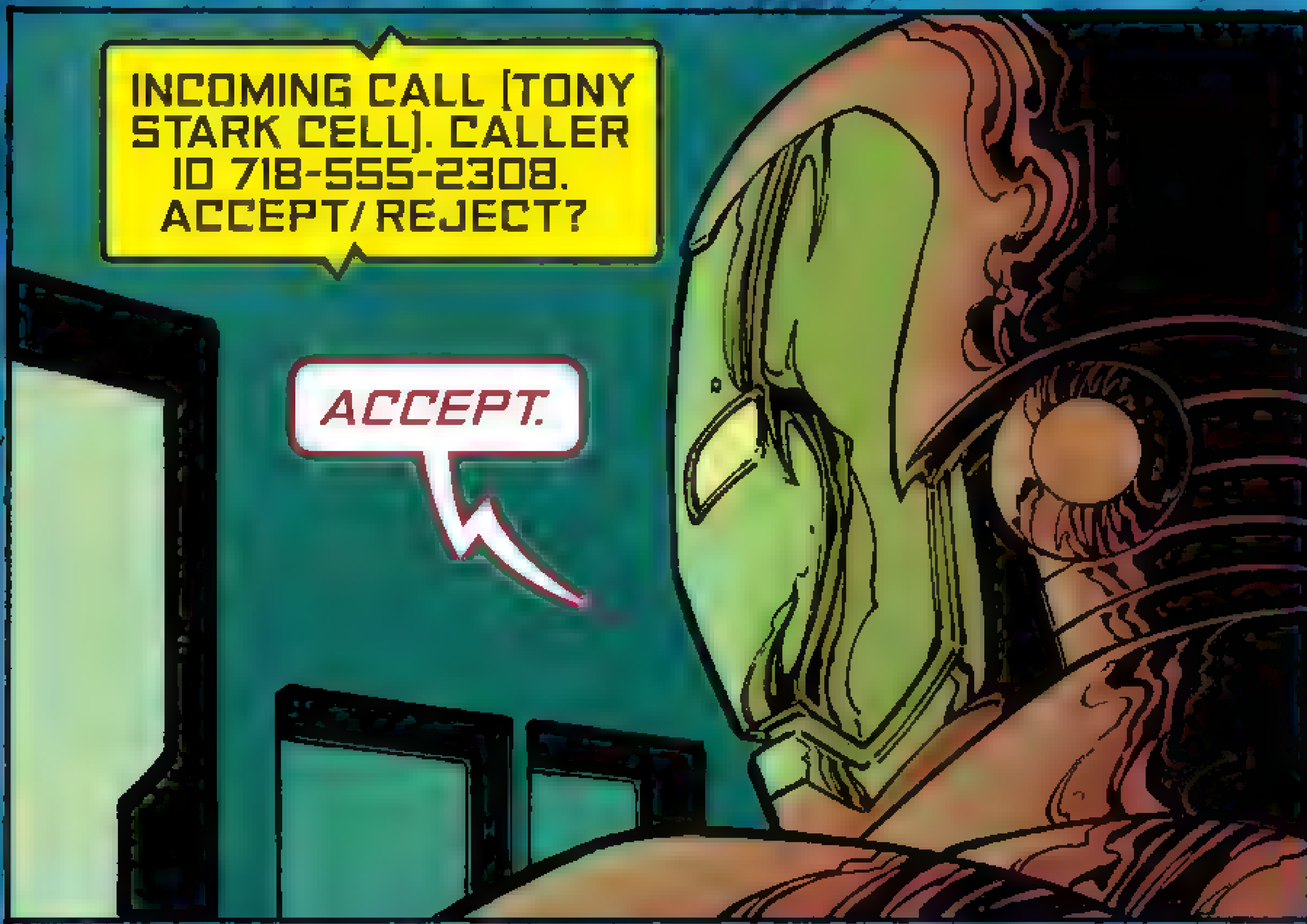


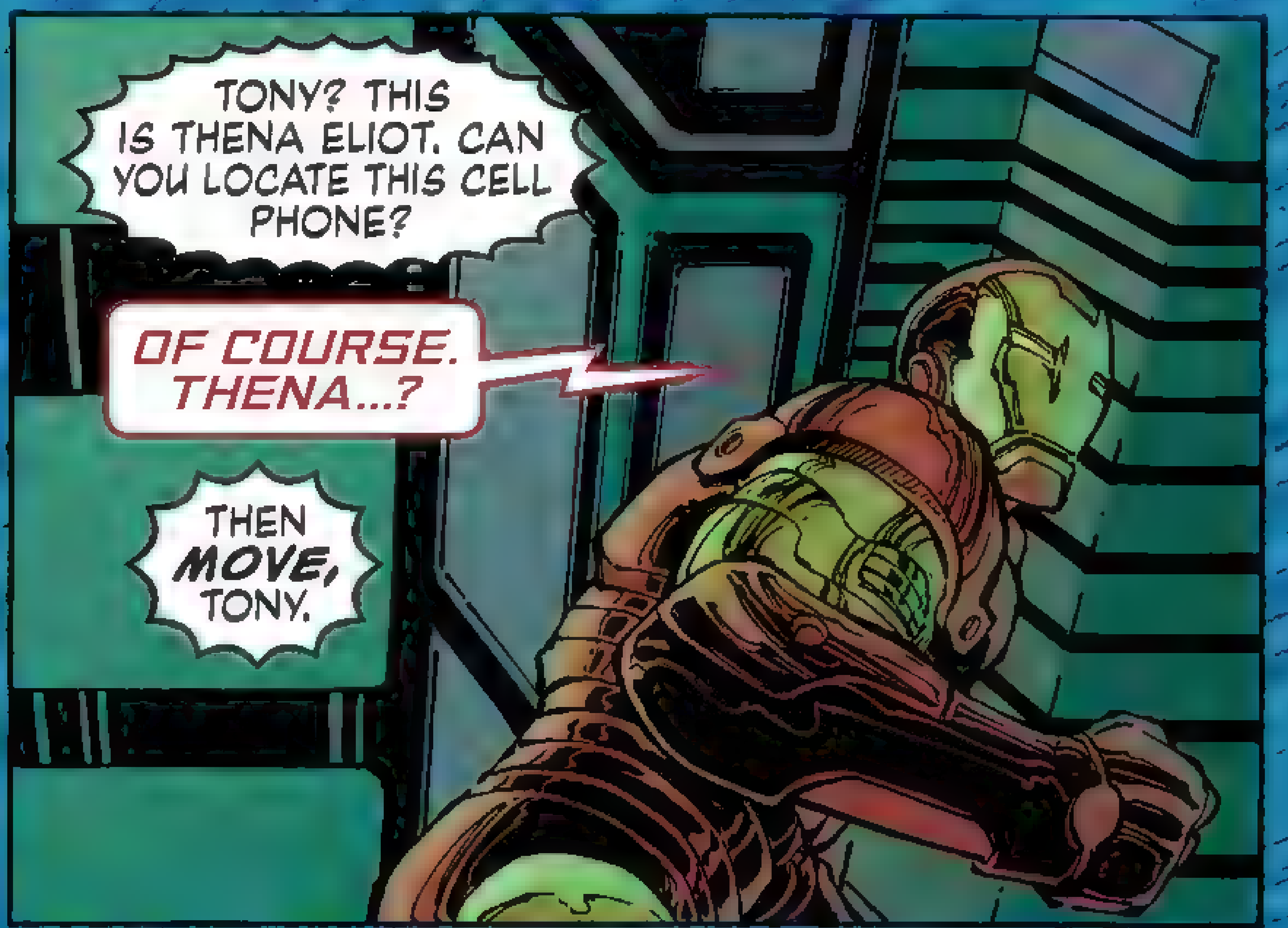

AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS, STARK TOWER...


GIVE ME ALL RECORDS ON FORMER AVENGER SERSI.
CLEARANCE LEVEL?
ULTIMATE.




NO RECORDS FOUND.
HUH?


INCOMING CALL [TONY STARK CELL]. CALLER ID 718-555-2308. ACCEPT/ REJECT?
ACCEPT.

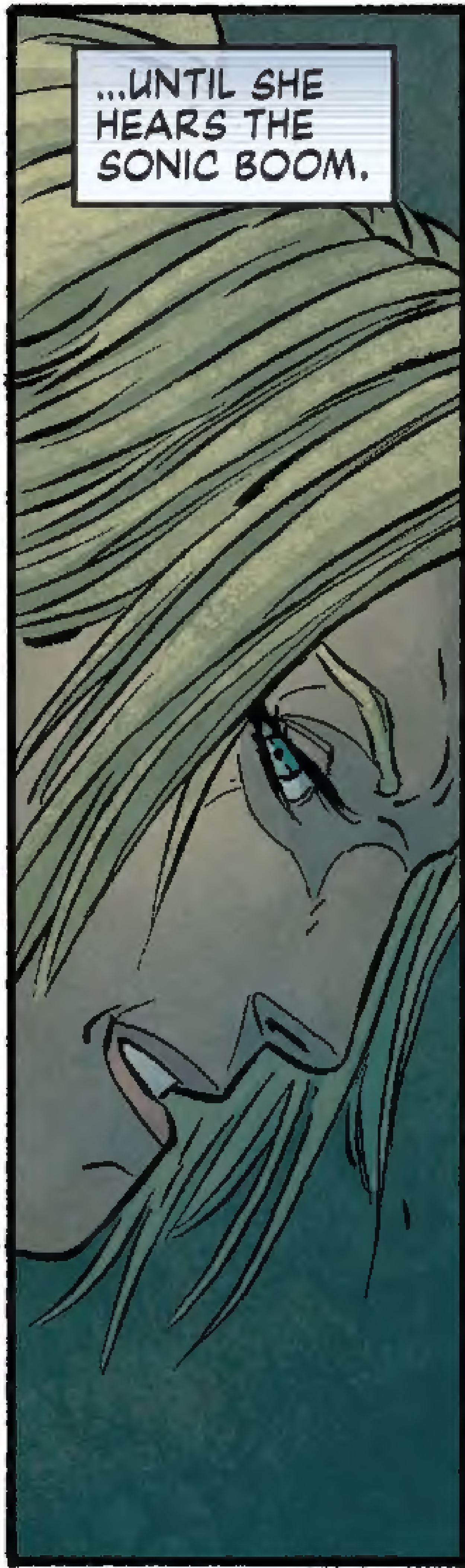

TONY? THIS IS THENA ELIOT. CAN YOU LOCATE THIS CELL PHONE?
OF COURSE. THENA...?
THEN *MOVE*, TONY.

HOLD ON.


SHE HOLDS ON...

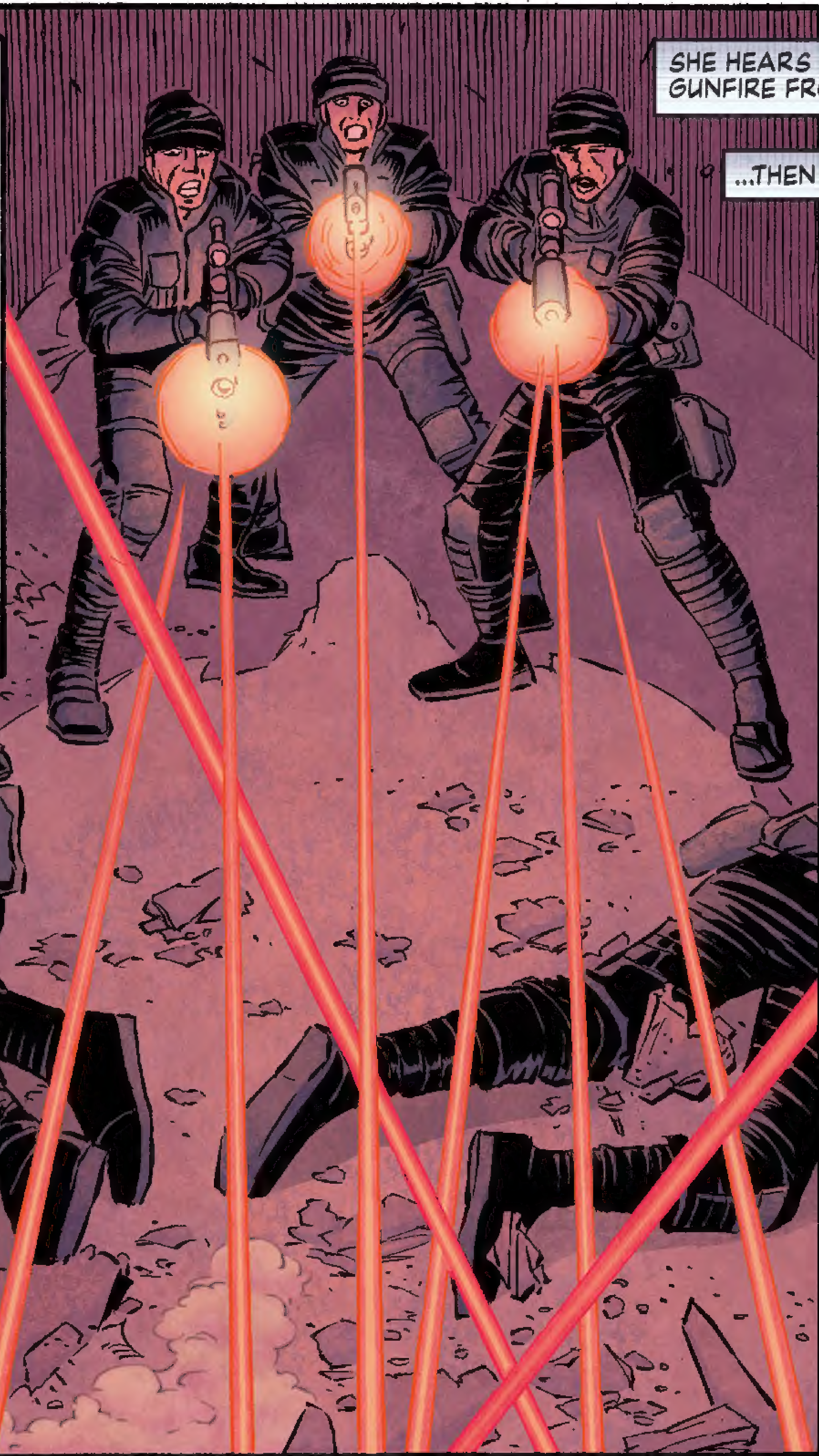












HELLO, TONY. THAT WAS FAST.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE TWO MEN?

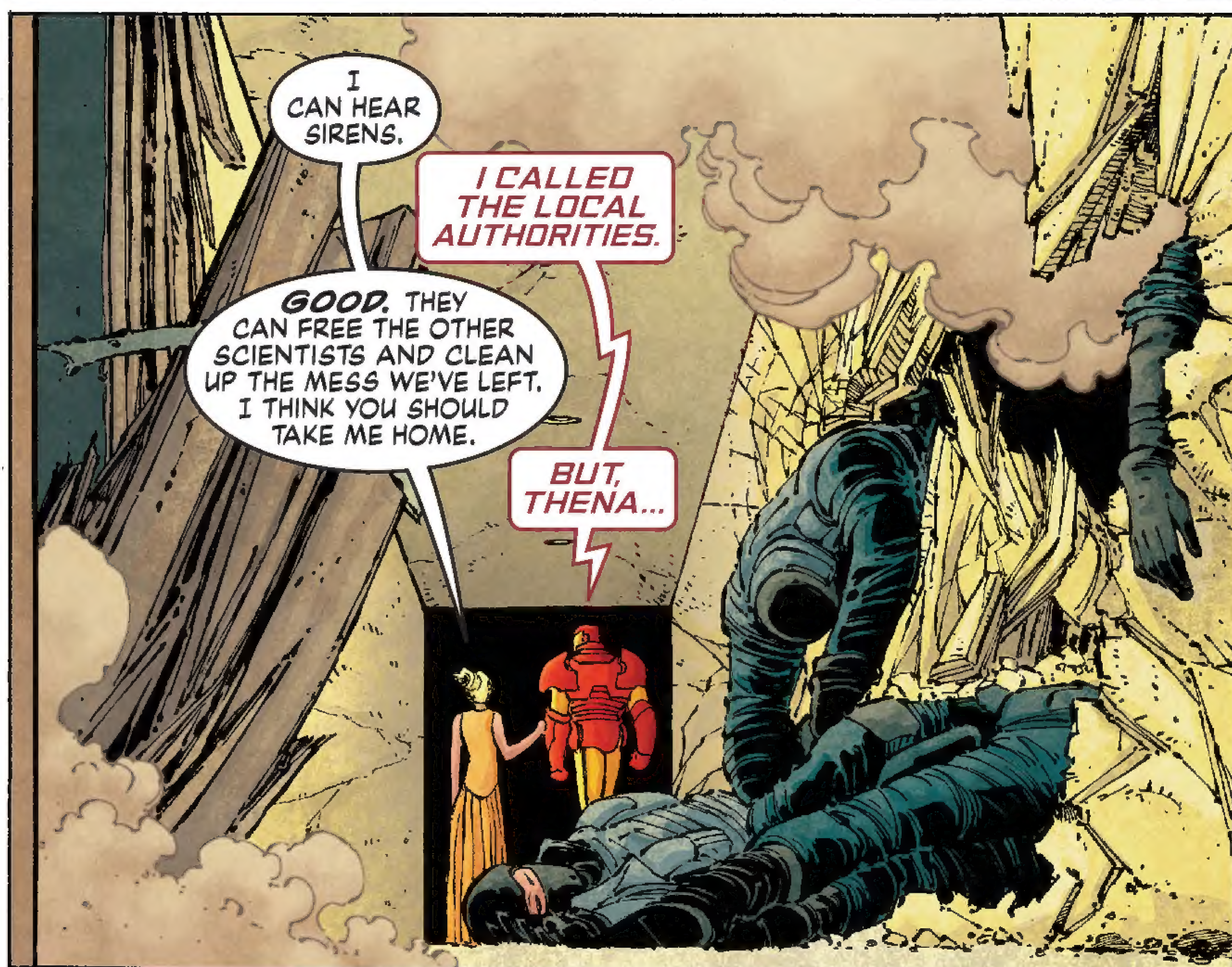
I GUESS *I* DID.

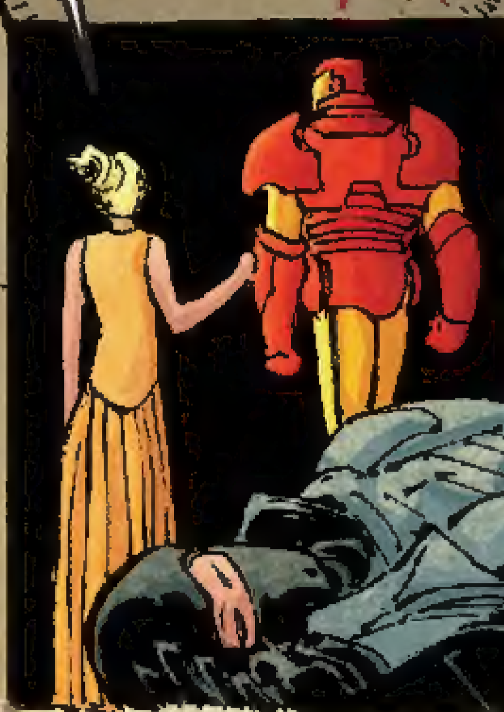
I DON'T THINK THEY'RE DEAD.

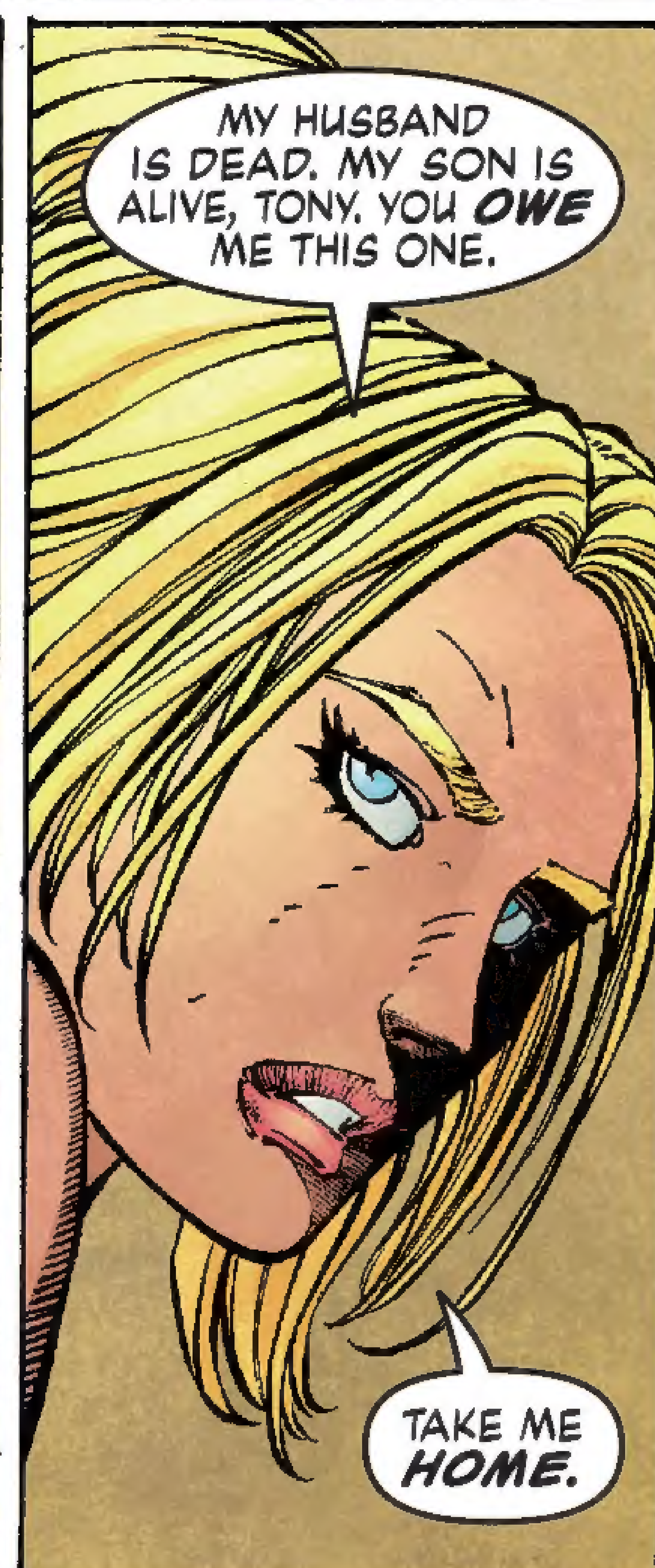
ALTHOUGH I *COULD* HAVE KILLED THEM, IF I'D WANTED TO.

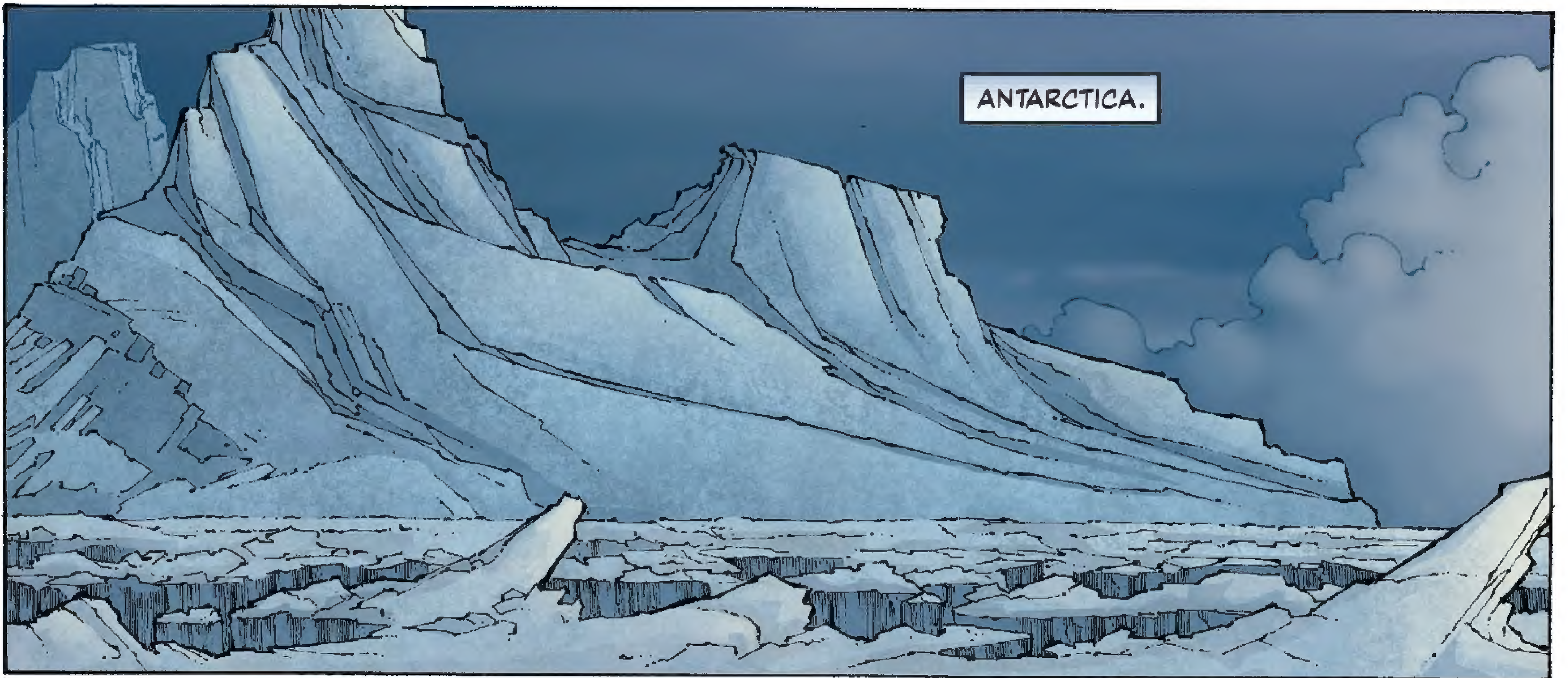
THEY MURDERED MY HUSBAND, DID YOU KNOW THAT?

I...YES. I SAW THE BODY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY--
THEN DON'T SAY **ANYTHING.** DO YOU KNOW WHO'S LOOKING AFTER MY SON?
I DON'T...I SHOULD HAVE CHECKED.
NOT AT ALL. YOU'RE A BUSY MAN. YOU'RE HOLDING DOWN TWO JOBS, AFTER ALL, AND, AS WE'VE ALREADY ESTABLISHED, THE RULES DON'T APPLY TO YOU.
THENA...I SAID I WAS SORRY.

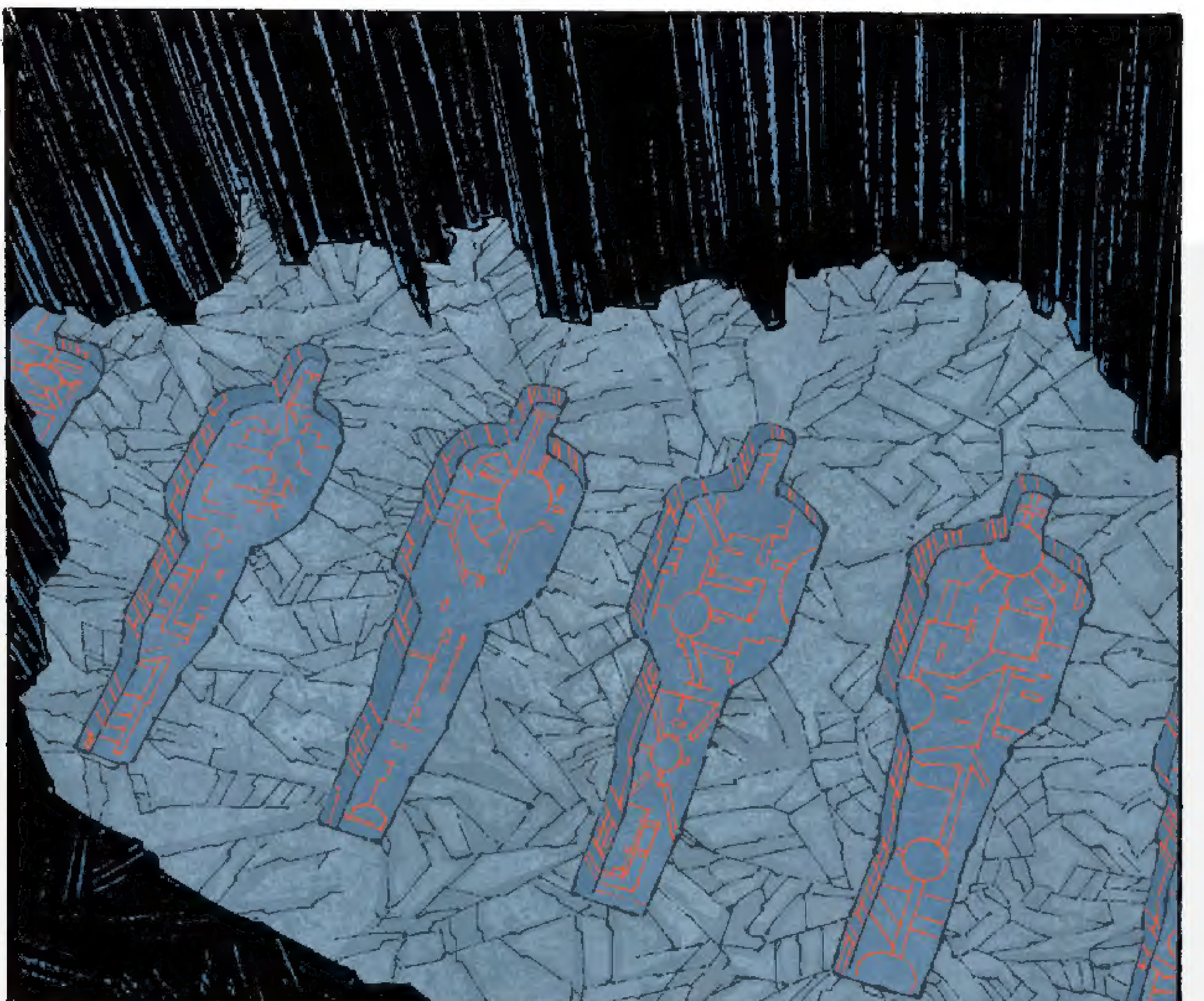












IKARIS COMPLETE.

PREPARE TO REACTIVATE.





ZONE